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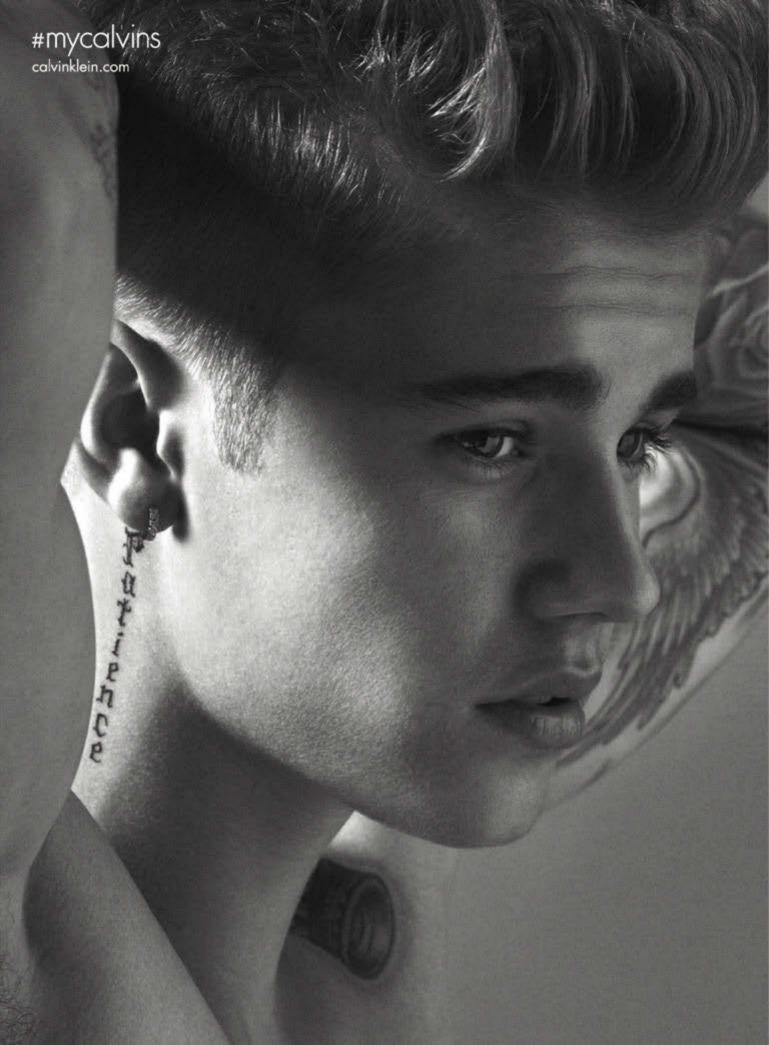
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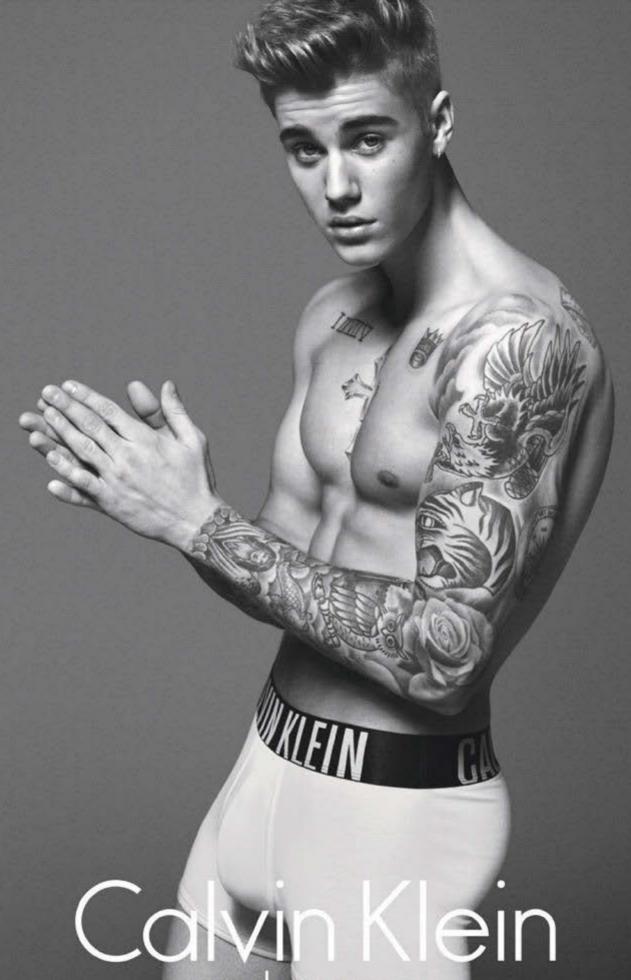












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GQ INSIDER SPOTLIGHT:

BRANDON BRYANT

INVESTMENT BANKER & BLOGGER NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Q: How does GQ inspire your style?

A: GQ has been inspiring my style since before I can even remember. When I was younger, whenever I went to the grocery store I headed straight to the magazine aisle to pick up a copy of GQ. Even at a young age I was trying to see what hot new trends were being highlighted and which new faces of fashion were leading the forefront through GQ. These days, GQ has completely inspired my style with the addition of the denim shirt.

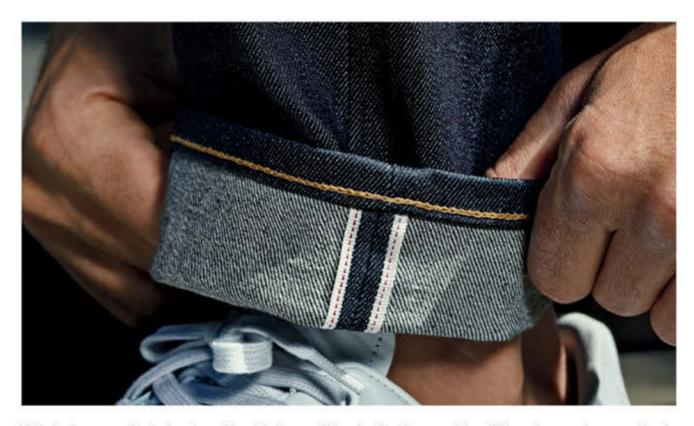
Q: Favorite trend of the moment?

A: It's a close tie between suede shoes and the "Pharrell" hat. Suede has made an epic return with the cap toe, double monk, and desert boot. Suede adds a classic yet rustic vibe that's perfect for the winter. And there's something special and majestic about the "Pharrell" hat. It gives you a distinguished look and, when styled with the right outfit, you'll be the best dressed in the room, hands down.

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IN THIS ISSUE 04.2015







44 THE NEW KHAKI

Not your old office casual: Gap and GQ present a fresh take on the pant for spring, in cuts and styles to suit every modern type.

36 OFF CAMERA, ON POINT

Look good every time you step out the door. Here, Terrence J. and Stacy Adams show why fresh spring style starts from the ground up.

61 THE STYLISH ONES

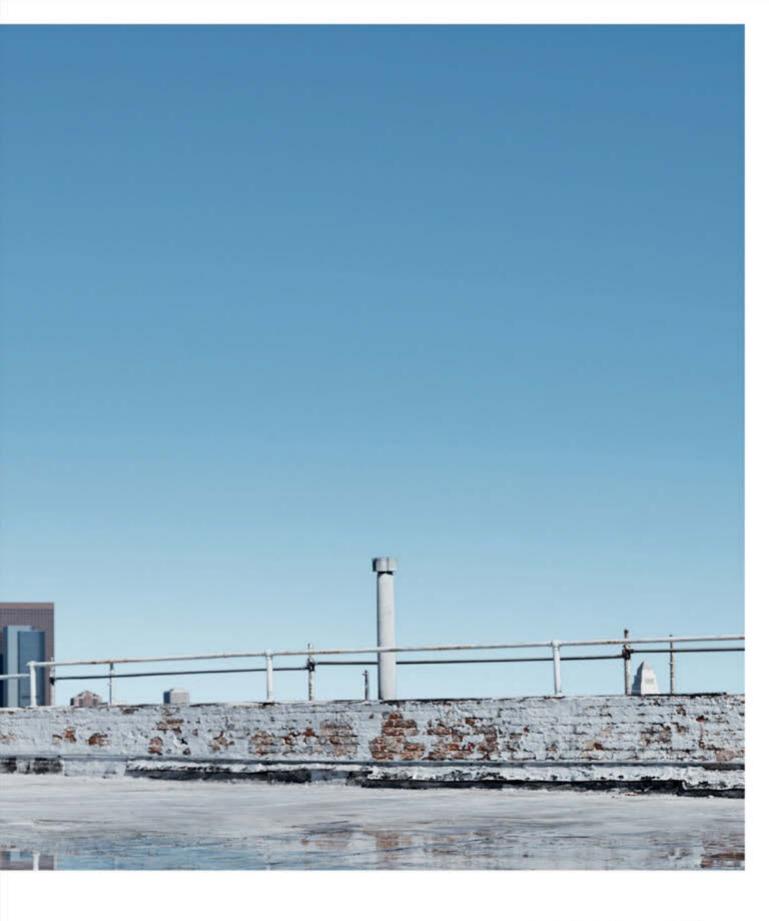
Our GQ guy has a knack for dressing dapperly during life's biggest moments. Take a glimpse into his stylish world with outfits he found at Simon.















Coach Drawers

Kid Cudi/ Recording Artist and Actor
Campus Backpack in red
Nylon Aviator in red
coach.com







GQ Style What To Wear Now

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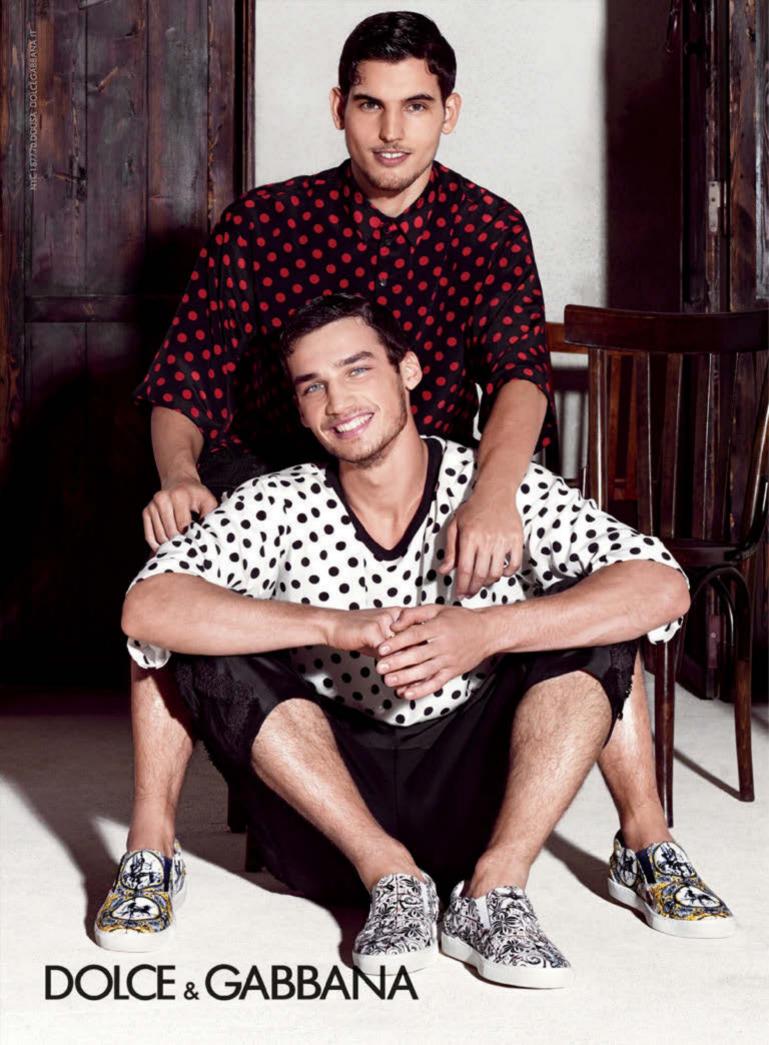
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LOUIS VUITTON

PAGE 2/2



Now that Mad Men has wrapped, Jon Hamm can finally loosen his tie BY BRETT MARTIN

What You Can Learn from Don Draper's 10 Best Looks

We can't tell you how to climb your way to the top of your agency, but we can tell you how to dress the part by JIM MOORE

GQ's Guide to What's Blowing Up Our New Testament on

the ultra-active, athleticsinspired style you need to know now, starring A\$AP Rocky

136 don His French

Jean Touitou, A.P.C.'s legendary founder, might be a bit too brash for his raw denim britches BY ZACH BARON

eard Me!

All you need to know to join the facial-hair revolution

144 Suki Punch

Brit model Suki Waterhouse is taking over the fashion world and your InstaFeed
BY ALICE GREGORY

Take the Rains
TV on the Radio singer Tunde Adebimpe tries on shells—the part raincoat/ part parka outerwear you'll 100 percent need this spring

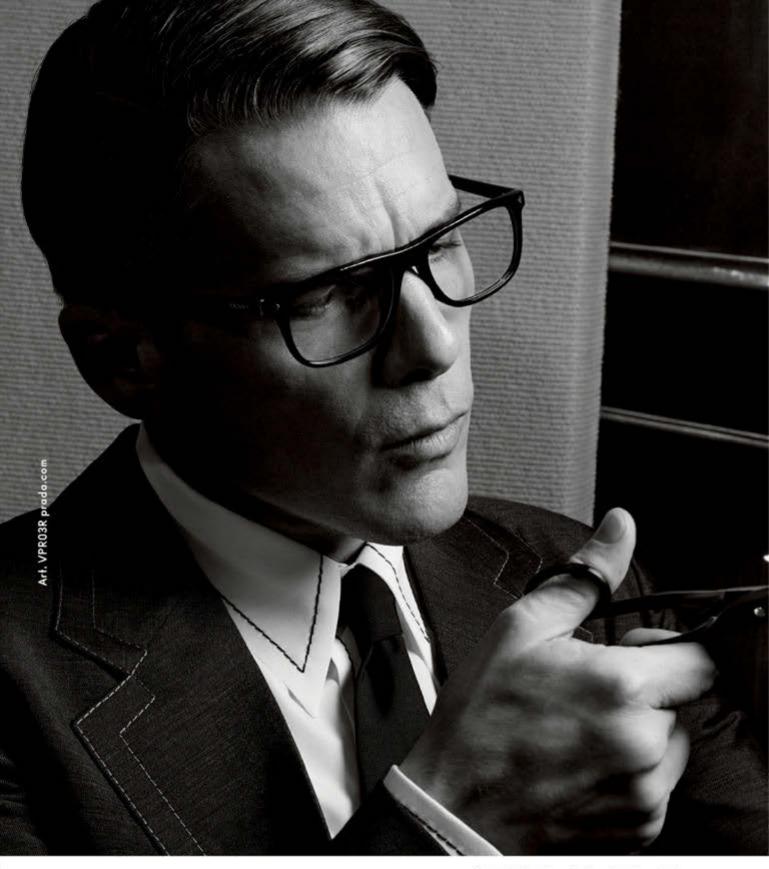
152 Color Inside the Lines

As actor Sam Claflin shows, wearing color is about figuring out how one or two hues can elevate your outfit

Jacket, \$2,050 (for suit), by Salvatore Ferragamo. Sweater, \$730, and sweatpants, \$730, by Gucci. Sneakers, \$455, by Adidas by Raf Simons.

ERIC RAY DAVIDSON

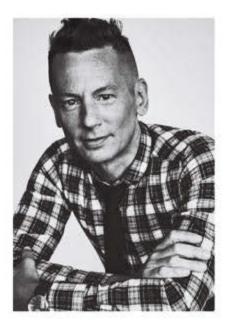




PRADA EYEWEAR

Ethan Hawke New York, November 2014

→ GQ's New HQ



MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD the news from Manhattan or seen our shots on Instagram, but *GQ* recently moved downtown into One World Trade Center, because unlike Barack Obama, we are patriots.

Reader, I have to tell you, it is weird. Weird because: I love it. I didn't know if I would.

What you must understand first is that before this, our offices were in Times Square, an area that had gotten cleaned up over the years but had evolved from being a center of lo-fi pornography to a center of manic tourism to, eventually, a clown circus. Almost literally. I'd get off the subway and have to fight my way past grown men in Elmo suits. These furry, possibly pestilent animals would then hug small children and demand photographic fees higher than what we pay models in GQ.

I couldn't get out of there fast enough. As soon as we arrived downtown, I thought: Yeah, a *Gentlemen's Quarterly* could settle down here.

Our company, Condé Nast, bet crazy-big on this place, renting out twenty-three stories and moving sixteen magazines and a bunch of digital publications to this still-being-built 104-floor skyscraper. *GQ*'s on the twenty-eighth floor, but even at that height, standing before these sweeping views of downtown, the Statue of Liberty, and the Hudson River (wait! There's a *river* in New York!?!), I feel like a mad industrialist in an Ayn Rand novel. Or like I'm finally on the cusp of living the *Mad Men* dream (which I'm pretty sure, technically, only lasted two episodes). So I say hell yeah to this building. One hundred and four floors of glass and steel and luxury fashion closets!

Now, it's not finished yet, and sure, there are some...issues. Did you know it holds the record for being the tallest building in the country that has never had its windows cleaned? See, back in November, two window washers had to be rescued when their rig slipped and swayed precariously right outside the sixty-eighth floor, and after that, no window washer would go near the damn place. By the time we moved in, it was kind of like living in my mom's car, the one that never, ever has windshield-wiper fluid in it. It's gotten to the point where we've started longing for the days of New York's squeegee men.

I'm sure they'll figure it out—maybe someone will invent a Windex drone or something. Meantime, it doesn't seem to matter. The building is suffused with light, almost blindingly so. When the winter sun hangs low toward dusk, the light pierces with a surprising violence, and all the editors here shamble over to pull the shades down, like stricken vampires. Fifteen minutes later, it passes, and we rush to get the shades back up, because the sunsets—well, I feel like I never saw a sunset here in New York City until now.

I think the building is much cooler from inside than out. Outside, it does its job, which is to stand tall and look glassy and somehow impervious. Inside, the building feels modern, but not oppressively so, the offices laid out in the vaguely open-plan style that says, "Yes, we have accepted that our fate lies in cubicles."

The elevators are automated in that spooky Japanese way. You punch the floor you want, stand around waiting for the next car, then suddenly this sexy robot

voice whispers, "Lobby." You jump in, don't touch any buttons, because sexy robots don't like you to touch them.

Condé Nast people all go to lunch at the same hour, a lot of us to a sprawling new food hall on the Hudson River, reached by a subterranean passage. I'm sure we're a very particular, almost tribal sight. You see us swarming up the food-hall escalators in droves, and you just know that a lot of kale is going to be consumed.

After lunch, back upstairs. The views keep pulling you to the light. Part of the sweep is the 9/11 Memorial, a constant presence, the dark waters flowing inside of themselves continuously, like some wakeful disturbance. If you look down from my office, it's the first thing you see, you can't miss it, you will be equally troubled and calmed, and the strange swirl of feeling will be unsettling each time, as it should be, will always be.

Nearby sits—and that's the word, <code>sits</code>—the massive, unfinished, soon-to-befancy-ass transit hub designed by Spanish starchitect Santiago Calatrava, justly celebrated for his bridges and buildings that resemble birds in flight. Problem is, right now, rather than, say, a sparrow taking flight, it looks like a giant goose has landed, having lodged itself defiantly between buildings half its size. But we'll see. Maybe strange birds eventually fly.

Underground, the hub, once it's finished, will look like something out of *Gattaca*. Only with lots of Aesop grooming boutiques and Eataly pasta stations. More subterranean passageways! I kind of can't wait to live completely underground. Who needs sun! We've got enough on the twenty-eighth floor.

What it mostly feels like down here is *new*, industrious, cab-choked, a construction zone that's already functioning, as if the future of a smoother, smarter downtown were being imagined and hammered out right before our eyes.

I just pray to God those f#%*ing Elmos stay away.

JIM NELSON

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF









→ "I'm really known for my female pictures instead of my male pictures," says MARIO TESTINO, who is, let's be clear, just being modest. His latest book, SIR, is all about dudes, and if nearly thirty years working with GQ is any indication, he knows how to shoot men. Testino's new tome is limited-edition; buy one and sidetrack any conversation you have in its vicinity.—CARSON GRIFFITH



↑ That's over 300 iconic photographs bound in sleek midnight blue.







↑↑ Channing Tatum tunes up a cherry red Chevy in GQ's August 2009 issue.

LOOK!BOOK!

- ↑ "The photos that linger in my mind often are the Rolling Stones images," says Testino. "They've been so influential in all of our lives."
- ← Given his past recreational habits, we're not sure if David Bowie was aware there was no piano.
- ← Michael Fassbender, on the cover of GQ's June 2012 issue, with a friend.





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• The ever expanding GQ universe makes a mark all month long. We've got the most impactful moments, distilled.



Sam Smith: GQ Hype Man

→ The 22-year-old British crooner was featured in the Legacy Project (February), our photographic celebration of the music makers who, this past year, left something lasting. When the story came out, he blitzed Instagram and Twitter several times. "So in love with this shoot and everyone who was a part of it," he wrote.





→ "Inside the Iron Closet"

by Jeff Sharlet (February '14), about the persecution—and quiet resistance—of gay men and women in Putin's Russia, won the National Magazine Award for Reporting. It's Sharlet's first NMA in a two-decade-plus career and Jim Nelson's eighth since becoming editor-in-chief in 2003.

Roger Goodell's Weeks from Hell

→ "The Season from Hell," our story on the NFL commish's tough year, came out in the midst of what was one of his lowest moments: the crumbling of his relationship with Patriots owner Robert Kraft over accusations that the Pats played with deflated balls to gain an advantage (dubbed Deflategate). Here, a time line of the breakup.

Sunday, January 18 Deflategate begins.



Sunday, January 25
When asked about it, Seahawks
star Richard Sherman says,
"Will [the Pats] be punished?
Probably not. Not as
long as Kraft and Goodell are
still taking pictures at their
respective homes."

Monday, January 26, 6 a.m.
The GQ story, in which Kraft is referred to as "the assistant commissioner," appears online; the fire is stoked.

Monday, January 26, 8 p.m. In a press conference, Kraft defends the Pats and demands an apology from the NFL (i.e., Goodell).

Friday, January 30 Goodell defends the NFL's probe: "This is my job." Later he says, "I admire, respect, and think very highly of [Kraft]."

Sunday, February 1 Super Bowl XLIX. Patriots beat the Seahawks, 28–24. Kraft doesn't mention Goodell once during his celebration speech.



NBA ALL-STAR PARTY

GQ Doubles

Down on Throwing

Epic Parties

→ We threw back-to-back parties in February: our inaugural Grammys party in Los Angeles and a celebration of March's NBA Style issue in N.Y.C., co-hosted by LeBron James. Attendees included...

Grammys party February 8, Hollywood Athletic Club

Clockwise from top left, musician Rita Ora; "Weird Al" Yankovic; rapper ILoveMakonnen; EDM maestro Calvin Harris; model Aarika Wolf; musician Janelle Monáe; Kylie Jenner; Khloé Kardashian; Kendall Jenner; actor Darren Criss

NBA All-Star party February 14, 20 Exchange Place Clockwise from top left, LeBron James; Super Bowl champ

Rob Gronkowski; OKC's Kevin Durant; models Josephine Skriver, Nadine Leopold, and Sara Sampaio; DJ Steph Floss; GQ editor-in-chief Jim Nelson; OKC's Russell Westbrook; actor Chadwick

 ${\tt GQ}$ prefers that letters to the editor be sent to letters @ ${\tt GQ}.{\tt com}.$ Letters may be edited.



OFF CAMERA, ON POINT

An entertainment industry polymath, Terrence Jenkins, better known as Terrence J., is used to having all eyes on him, even when he's off the clock. "It's important to be focused every time you step out that door," the E! News coanchor says of his off-camera style. "When I'm wearing a fresh outfit, I just feel better. I want to run into people. I hope my exgirlfriend bumps into me at the grocery store."

And yet the 32-year-old actorauthor-producer admits the West Coast has had an effect on his casual style game. "Everybody dresses down in L.A.," he explains. "But in the spring, you get to wear more fun, lighter colors, and lighter shoes."

Indeed, no matter what time of year it is, or what he's doing in his downtime—whether headed to the club or cooling his heels at home—Jenkins knows that any great look is built from the ground up. "Everything starts with the shoes. They have to be on point," he says. "Even if you got beat-up jeans or a bad shirt on, at least your shoes are poppin'."

THE TREVOR

For twice the fashion points this spring, put on the Irevor by Stacy Adams. This hard-bottomed double monkstrap features soft Buffelo leathers and a natural stacked leather heel that'll raise your game for both dressy and casual occasions. "It's all about looking fresh and making sure your kicks are stylish," ssys Jenkins.









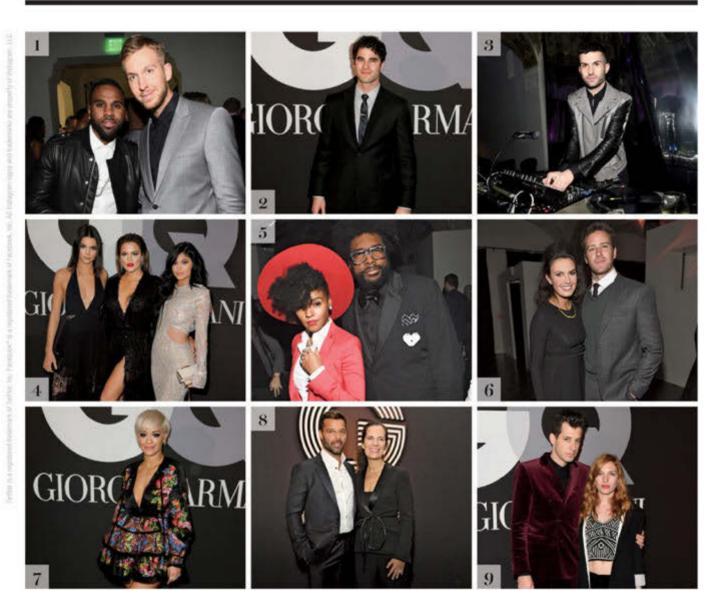


THE SWEENEY

If you want to add some edge to your footwear, there's no better shoe than the Sweeney by Stacy Adams. This modern wing tip features contrasting leather and flocal-printed suece uppers—with breathable Suedetec linings—plus a fully cushioned insole with Memory Foam. It's like a one-two punch of comfort and style.



EVENTS → PROMOTIONS → EXCLUSIVES



Recording artist Jason Derulo with recording artist Cahin Harris in Emporie Armani 3. Actor Darren Criss in Emporio Armani 3. DJ A-Trak 4. TV personalities Kendall Jenner, KNoë Kardashian, and Kylie Jenner
 Recording artist Janelle Monae in Emporio Armani with drummer Questlove 6. Actor Armie Harnmer with wife Elizabeth Chambers, both in Giorgio Armani 7. Recording artist Rita Ora 8. Recording artist Ricky Martin with Roberts Armasi, both in Giorgio Armani 9. Recording artist Mark Rohson and wife Joséphine de la Baume.

FEBRUARY 2015 | LOS ANGELES

GQ AND GIORGIO ARMANI HOST INAUGURAL GRAMMYS AFTER-PARTY

Following the 57th annual Grammy Awards, GQ teamed up with **Giorgio Armani** to cohost our first-ever Grammys after-party, Artists and A-listers arrived to the late-night bash at the Hollywood Athletic Club ready to let loose and celebrate music's biggest night. Roberta Armani and GQ Editor-in-Chief Jim Nelson greeted VIPs making their way inside the historic Sunset Boulevard venue, Guests including Calvin Harris, Grammy nominee Whiz Khalifa, Mark Ronson, and Rita Ora sipped cocktails and mingled into the early hours as DJ A-Trak spun his signature high-energy party anthems.



Countdown display

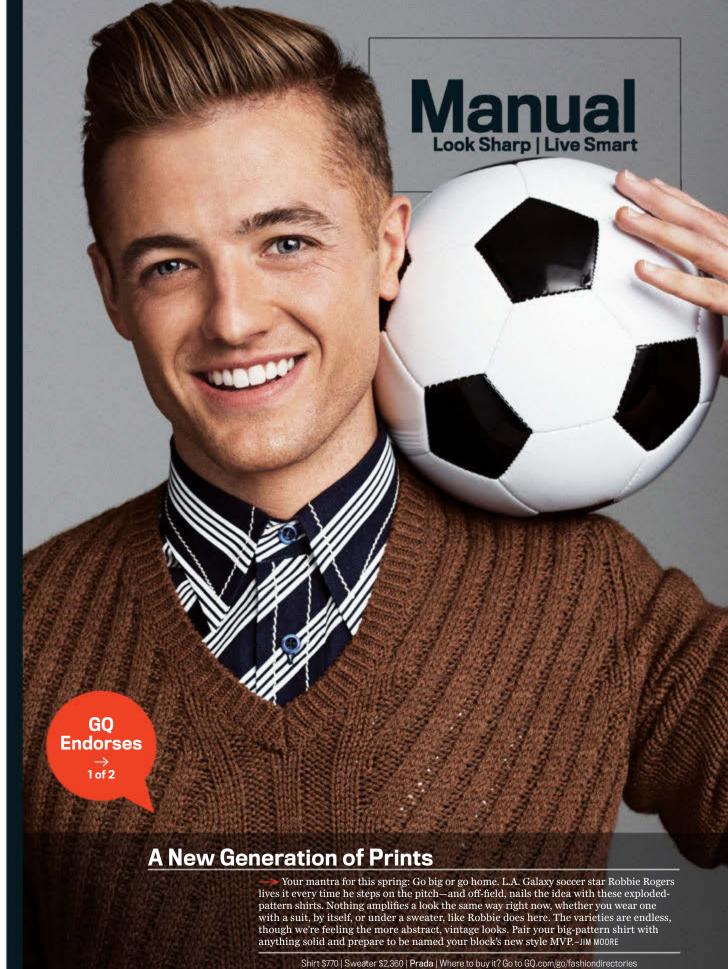
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← 2 of 2

Not-So-Fine Prints

You know that Hawaiian shirt you picked up last summer? Meet its brighter-than-ever cousin: the exploded-print shirt. Here's how to pull off wearing oversize feathers, enlarged flowers, and mondo checks

Smaller Canvas, Bolder Paint

We've found that tripping-on-acid prints like these work equally well on a short-sleeve shirt. Why? Because you can dress it up (see below) or chill it out with a denim jacket, as seen here. Just make sure your short-sleeve shirt is the twenty-firstcentury fitted kind, not the blousy usedcar-salesman kind. -SAM SCHUBE



Shirt, \$50, by Topman. Jeans, \$185, by A.P.C. Jacket, \$178, by Levi's. Belt by Ermenegildo Zegna. Bracelet by Giles & Brother.





Give Your Suit a Kick

A light gray suit, white oxford, and dark tie make for a perfectly satisfactory spring uniform. But a light gray suit, all-black sneakers, and a psycho-tropical printed shirt? Now you can go from work to the barespecially if it's on the boardwalk—without a second thought.



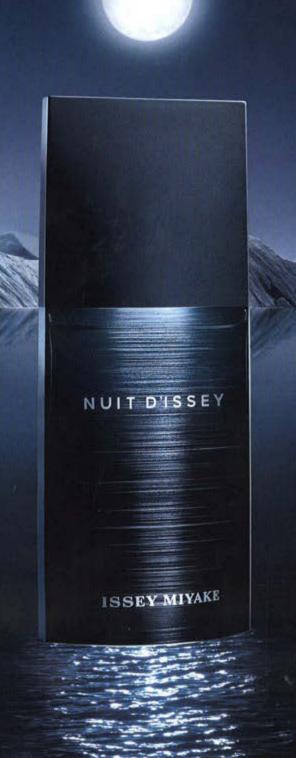
Shirt, \$81, by Mr Nieves. Suit, \$1.460, by Band of Outsiders. Sneakers, \$409, by Common Projects. Pocket square by Tom Ford. Bracelet by Giles & Brother. Where to buy it? Go to GQ.com/go /fashiondirectories



RIGHT: JOSEPHINE SCHIELE (9). PROP STYLIST: RENATA CHAPLYNSKY AT ART DEPARTMENT.

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EVENTS → PROMOTIONS → EXCLUSIVES



















L. Andrew Garfield, Joshua Jackson, and Taylor Kitsch with GQ Publisher Howard Mittman 2. Zachary Quinto and Bravo's Andy Cohen 3. Joshua Jackson 4. Movado Chairman and CEO Efraim Grinberg and Jenna Bush Hager 3. Movado Parlee limited-edition bicycle 6. Terry Crews and George Loper 7. Scott Harrison of charity:water 8. Barrett Ward of FashionABLE 9. From left: Sekombi Katondolo, Paul Risckhoff, Movado's Alan Chinich, Sean Carasso, CAA Foundation's Darmell Strom, Stephen Powell, Jenna Bush Hager, Movado's Efraim Grinberg, Nick Ehrmann, F.K. Day, Movado Ambassador Wynton Marsalis, and Movado's Rick Cotes

OCTOBER 2014 | NEW YORK CITY

THE GENTLEMEN'S BALL

GQ's annual charity gala, hosted by Bravo's Andy Cohen, honored deserving men enacting real change in the world. **Nautica** presented the evening's Ambassador Awards to Joshua Jackson for his support of Oceana, Taylor Kitsch for his work with African Children's Choir, Zachary Quinto for his involvement with The Trevor Project, George Lopez and his organization, The George Lopez Foundation, and Andrew Garfield for his dedication to two charities; Worldwide Orphans and Youth Mentoring Connection. The Gentlemen's Fund Advisory Panel selected the evening's five Leader Award Winners, presented by Movado.

Sean D. Carasso, F.K. Day, Nick Ehrmann, Stephen Powell, and Barrett Ward were also honored with commemorative timepieces to mark the occasion. The evening was made possible in partnership with CAA Foundation. Additional event support was provided by Bang & Olufsen.





Chambray Blazer \$89.95

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Square Bar Leather Belt \$34.95

Canvas Slip-on Sneakers \$39.95





A CLASSIC SILHOUETTE, WITH A STRAIGHT LEG

STRAIGHT FIT

This no-nonsense cut lends itself to athletic or bohemian styling—a go-to for many looks. Roll up those cuffs and feel the spring air on your ankles.

CREATIVE CLASS



THIS TRIM **CUT MAKES** YOU LOOK AND FEEL TALLER

SLIM FIT

Opt for the lighter cream tone of this contemporary khaki for spring. With its tapered leg and trim cut, this new classic is an especially solid option for a cleaned-up look. Shirt-tuckers and necktie fans, take note.



SHOP THESE LOOKS IN STORE AND ONLINE AT GAP.COM

GAP







Tread Lightly at the Cobbler Yes, your local shoe-repair shop can cover your existing leather soles with a layer of rubber. But it's better to ask the store where you bought the shoes to do it—or at least to recommend a replacement sole. They'll know how to modify your kicks without throwing off the "pitch," the delicate balance that makes them comfortable. As with bad singers, being pitchy can cause pain.—JIM MOORE



MILAN NEW YORK LONDON MADRID ISTANBUL TOKYO HONG KONG SHANGHAI





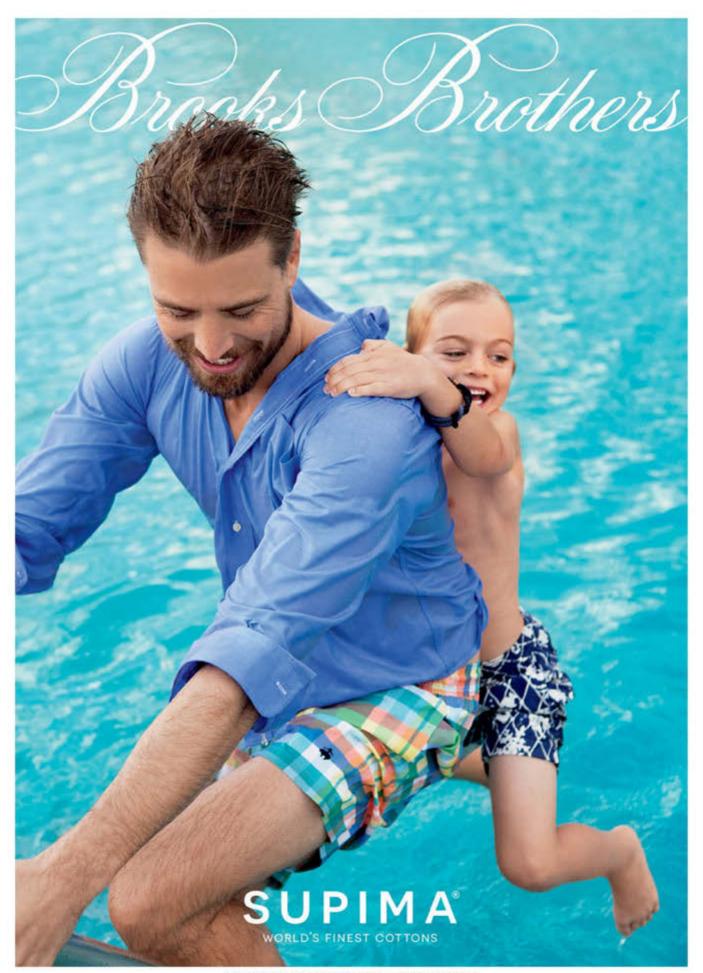


PRESENTS

The difference YOU can feel

SUPIMA

WORLD'S FINEST COTTONS





The Future of Fashion, 2015 Edition

Each spring we ask ourselves which young menswear designers out there are pointing the way forward. Then we sign up the best ones to create a capsule line of their clothes, to be sold in the fall exclusively at Gap stores. So cue the drumroll...and get to know the labels you'll soon be wearing, pictured here with their style muses

The Destroyers > NSF

L.A. (Established 2005)

- Designers: Nick Friedberg and Jamie Haller
- Rip it up: You know your favorite flannel with the tear in the elbow? Or your perfectly broken-in jeans with that faded coffee stain? NSF's clothes are that distressed from day one, handshredded and dyed until they're lovably grimy. "There's like six people sitting there with sandpaper, rubbing on a garment, Friedberg says.
- Old's cool: "Jamie and I are both super

vintage enthusiasts," he says. "And I always look for those pieces that are sun-faded or paint-spattered or there's a hole in it. There's a life and a soul and a softness to it."

• Keep it real: NSF's collection for Gap will replicate the flagship line's rough edges. "We're not ever gonna water down our product so we can sell it to anyone and everyone. It's always going to be cool and small and crafted. Not everybody wants a holey T-shirt. I get it."

 Friedberg (left) and Haller in their downtown L.A. studio with Nathan Mitchell, a professional tap dancer who's modeled their menswear.



HART

The Precocious Tailor > David Hart

Brooklyn (Established 2009)

- Inspiration: Ever since he showed up to elementary school wearing a bow tie, David Hart has been into tailored clothes. "But the real origin of my career," he says, "is that in high school I took a clothing-construction class as a way to meet girls. I was the only guy in the class, and I loved it."
- Sticking his neck out: Six years ago, after stints designing for one-name titans like Ralph and Tommy, Hart launched a small, thoughtful tie
- line that spawned a full men's collection. "At that time there wasn't a lot going on in neckwear that was interesting," Hart says. "It was all those shiny silk ties. And I was really interested in wools and tartans."
- Color theory: Hart finds himself drawn to "great rich blues or mustards or greens that you throw with browns," a retro sensibility. "Today's men are so caught up in navy-gray-black," he says, "that we forget to wear color."
- Hart (left) and rocker Nick Waterhouse met after realizing they were mutual fans. "He had actually reached out to me," Hart says, "and I was like, 'Hey, I was at your show a week ago."



NORDSTROM MEN'S SHOP



CONVERSE



Best New Designers '15

2 of 2



Designer: Chris Stamp

Natural habitat: The street and surf cultures of Southern California, where Stamp grew up. "I appreciate and try to nod to what's coming out of New York and Paris,' he says, "but give it a coastal feel.' A matter of black and white: Stamp's clothes (think snapback caps, drapey graphic tees, nylon bombers, polka-dot windbreakers) tend to have a domino's color scheme, which makes sense for a designer who was basically born wearing black. The elevator pitch: "I don't like to use the word streetwear, ever," Stamp says. "But at the core I make luxury streetwear. It's something casual and modern. There's an understated

arrogance about the line. Things aren't crazily overdone, but when you look at the

details and you look

at the color palette,

it feels elevated.'

at the cut and you look

Stamp (wearing his typical black) in his L.A. studio with a handful of staffers (in white).

The Fabric Junkies > The Hill-Side

Brooklyn (Established 2009)

- Co-founders: Brothers Emil and Sandy Corsillo Origins: In college,
- Emil began obsessing over Japanese workwear brands, fashion magazines, and selvage denim after meeting stylish Japanese dude Hisashi Oguchi, who's now a partner.
- The ties that bind: The Hill-Side launched as an accessories line, doing square-bottom ties in rare textiles. Though they can now dress a man head to toe, "our approach

to making garments comes from our approach to making ties," Emil says, "which for years was: We make the same object every season but offer it in thirty or forty materials.

What's in store:

"We want to infiltrate Gap with high-quality fabrics," Emil says. Judging by their own line, that could mean chambray shirts, linen ties, tweed herringbone jackets, or sneakers made from blanket-striped wool.-NICK MARINO

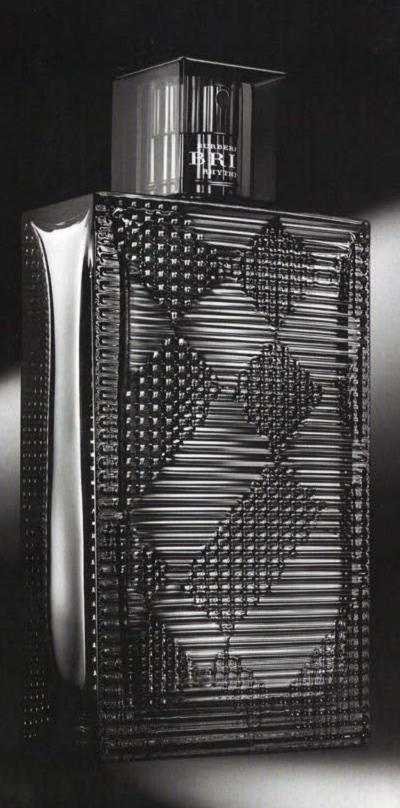
Emil (right) and Sandy Corsillo (center) pose with James Wilson, whose menswear blog, Secret Forts, was an early Hill-Side supporter.



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EVENTS → PROMOTIONS → EXCLUSIVES



ALL-STAR DAD CONTEST

This June, GQ and the National Father's Day Committee will honor the legacy of fatherhood with the All-Star Dad contest. Together they will search to find one special dad who always goes above and beyond. Nominate your All-Star Dad today and be entered for the chance to win a trip for four to New York City to see him be honored, along with a select group of national role model fathers, at the annual Father of the Year Awards.

allstardad.org

So in alistantiad one to enter. Starts 12:01 AM, Friday, January 9, 2015, and ends 11:59 PM, Monday, May 11, 2015. Open to legal residents of the configurus Unleid States and D.C. Sotmospars bore minors under the age of 18 munt be accompanied by a permission agrupture from an adulthogal guardan and exclude employees of the Sporsor, their immediate tumbles, and those living in the same horsehold. Viol outside the configuration under Statists and D.C. and visions probibilitied. ARV of price is \$3,500. Sporsor: The Father's Day/Mother's Day Council, Inc.







SEPTEMBER 2014 | NEW YORK CITY

HUBLOT CLASSIC FUSION DWYANE WADE LAUNCH

Hublot, GQ, and Dwyane Wade celebrated the launch of the Hublot Classic Fusion "Dwyane Wade" timepiece with an exclusive dinner at Omar's in Greenwich Village. Friends were invited to the private restaurant, which was transformed into a speakeasy for the evening. Vincent Vuillaume, President of Hublot of America, and Wade unveiled the new watch before joining guests for a concert by artist Inyang Bassey.



JANUARY 2015 I LOS ANGELES

A RUNWAY EXPERIENCE WITH BURBERRY, GQ, AND THE LOS ANGELES KINGS

Burberry, in partnership with GQ, and along with the Los Angeles Kings' Jarret Stoll and Matt Greene, hosted an exclusive event at Burberry's Rodeo Drive flagship featuring a special screening of the Autumn/Winter 2015 Menswear show. Guests previewed the collection and explored Burberry Runway Made to Order, with a portion of the night's proceeds benefiting the Special Olympics World Games.



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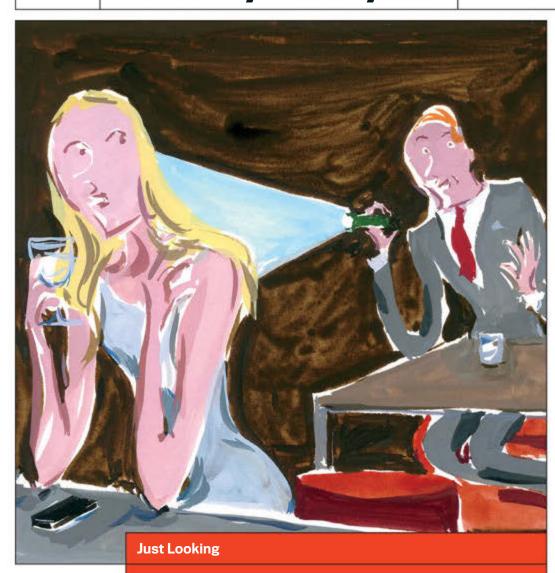


M

The Style Guy

Glenn O'Brien

Solves Your Sartorial Conundrums



In or Out?

When I'm wearing a crewneck sweater with a collared shirt underneath, should the tips of the collar stay under the sweater or go on top? » This depends partly on how the shirt and sweater interact fitwise but also. more important. on your personality. Are you extroor introverted? Freelance or company man? The collar-interface choice is a dead personality-type giveaway. I'm a little undecided myself, so I have

Let's say I see an attractive woman at a bar with one of her friends—no men in sight, no wedding ring. What's the fastest, least creepy way to approach her? I would try signaling her in Morse code using an official Boy Scout flashlight. Even if she doesn't understand Morse code, she couldn't help but notice your originality and nerve. Or you could casually walk by and ask for directions to the ladies' room. No, that's pretty creepy, too. Tinder?

one collar tucked in and the other one sticking out.

The Tie Dies Again

I keep hearing, especially in *GQ*, that knit ties have replaced all other styles of neckwear. Should I just get rid of my other, non-knit ties?

» I admit I haven't been wearing a tie much lately. I just haven't had the feel for it. I did wear an Hermès tie backward when Mercury went into retrograde a while back, but that's the only time in the past few months. I don't know if it's Occupy-inspired or some kind of Iranian Revolutionary Guard influence or some kind of Marxist-Leninist haberdashery meme, but I just don't feel like it lately. And I have a really fab collection. I agree that silk ties seem especially not-ofthe-moment maybe because all culpable government employees wear them all the time. And a black knit just looks like an anarchist straight edge—sorta Kraftwerk. But I do love a scarf. I guess I want to look like a worker, not an owner. I don't need another noose; I already have mortgages.

The Color Chart and the Tux

When a guy's wearing a tuxedo jacket that's a different color than his pants, were the two designed that way or did he buy them separately? And if buying separately, is the key to match the fabric? » If it's not matching, it's not a tuxedo but a dinner jacket and evening trousers. Black evening trousers go with white jackets and every other color but midnight blue. You match the weight of the trousers with the weight of the jacket. As far as lapels and trouser stripes go, just don't mix satin and grosgrain.

Last Call

What do you think of having a signature cocktail? What's yours?

» Having a signature cocktail seems a little like having your signature printed on your golf balls. Unless it's a martini or a scotch on the rocks, it's trying too hard-something that undercover aliens would do. On the other hand, the Dude had his White Russian, Bond had his "shaken. not stirred" martini. and Fast Eddie had his "J.T.S. Brown, no ice, no glass," so I guess if you consistently order a Tequila Sunrise or a Negroni, you want some narrative in your life. It's okay. I suppose if I had a signature cocktail, it would be champagne in a saucer glass. But whatever's left in that bottle of red is okay, too.

The Style Guy welcomes your questions. E-mail him at styleguy@gq.com. Plus: Find Glenn O'Brien on Twitter at @lordrochester.





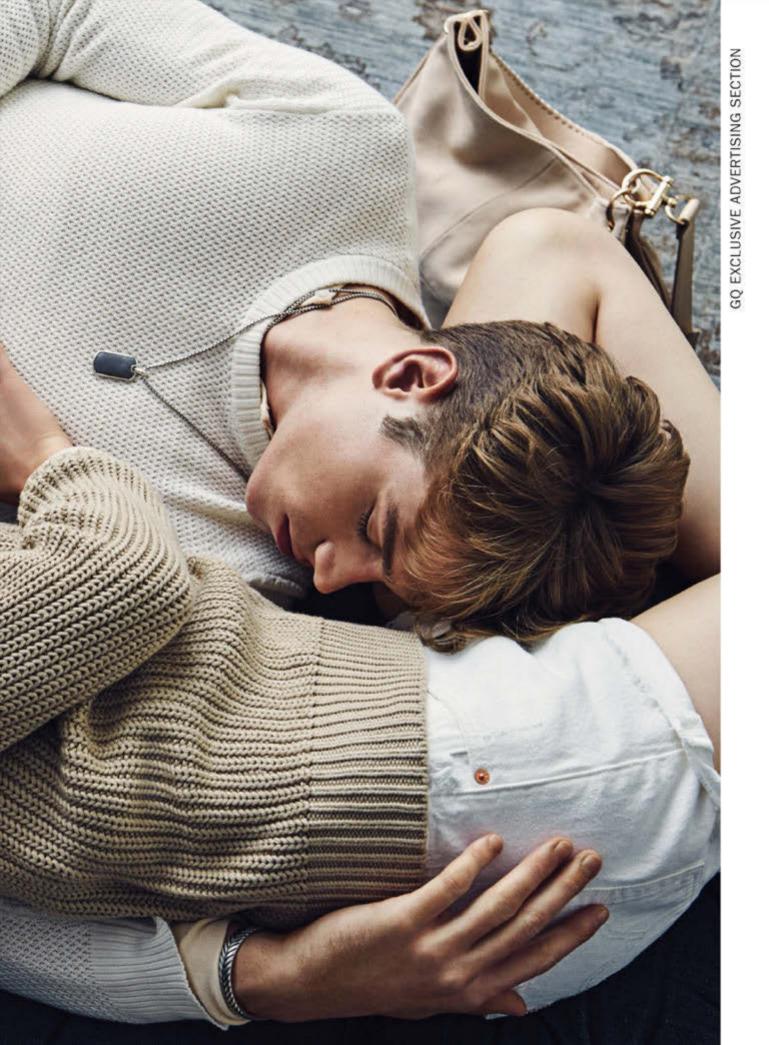












WEDDING

Fine tailoring and standout shoes (like these double monkstraps) subtly set you apart from the rest of the quest list.

STYLING TIP: Instead of another black or navy suit, try versatile gray for spring. It pairs well with any color in your wardrobe.

SHARE YOUR LOOK AT

On him: JOHN VARVATOS suit. J.CREW SARGENT shoes, available at SAKS
FIFTH AVENUE. TIFFANY watch.
On her: 8CBG dress. J.CREW earrings.
DAVID YURMAN bracelet (left hand).
SWAROVSKI bracelets. ANN TAYLOR cuff, and shoes.

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David Chang's Kitchen



A few years ago, I was helping a famous hotelier rework some of his restaurant menus, and he told me: "I don't care what you do about the room service-just make sure you include a fantastic eggs Benedict and a really luscious cheeseburger.'

I'm not exactly known for being a burger-and-Benedict guy, so I asked him why-and I've never looked at a roomservice menu the same way since. "Nothing tastes better after morning sex than eggs Benedict,' he said, "and a good cheeseburger is what people crave after fucking at night. I spend a lot of nights in hotels these days, and I guess I'm not having enough sex, because I haven't ordered either one of those things lately.

What I love about room service is this: It's private, I can make a huge mess, and if I hang one of those breakfast cards on my door at night, a human alarm clock (with food!) will wake me in the morning. Here's how to order room service right.

1. Don't get fancy.

Never order the lobster tail with stupid sauces. No ceviche or tartare, Jesus, please. And know this: No matter how nice the hotel, the guy cooking your food is not the best cook in the kitchen. With rare exceptions, the best cooks are cooking meals ordered by customers in the dining room, where they can plate and serve the food immediately to people they can actually see. So keep it simple. If everything else seems risky, just order the

How Not to Eff Up Room Service

It should be as easy as picking up the toilet phone and punching zero—but it never is. World traveler Chef Chang tells you what to order, what to avoid (lobster ragout at the Courtyard Red Roof Holiday Suites? No), and the hotels where room service deserves four stars



chicken fingers off the kids' menu. It's impossible to fuck up chicken fingers.

2. The busiest hotels with the busiest restaurants are the best places to order room service. I'm talking about anything that's over 300 rooms, like a big casino hotel. The rule Liust laid down about how the

best cooks always cook for the dining room? Not necessarily true in hotels like this, where that kind of room-service volume can upend the pecking order.

3. Okay, there are a few places where it's fine to get fancy. If the hotel restaurant is truly great, it's a safe bet to assume that the in-room dining

will be stellar, too. The NoMad Hotel in N.Y.C. has probably the best hotel dining in America. Everything on the room-service menu is delicious. but the club sandwich is the greatest club sandwich on the planet. I love The Hermitage Hotel down in Nashville, where the chef, Tyler Brown, raises all the beef and grows all the vegetables himself.

(Order the sock sausage with biscuits and whole-grainmustard gravy.) At The Line Hotel in L.A., Roy Choi makes this messy pizza-bread thing for breakfast that you have to eat alone because the only way to take it down is like an animal. And the room service at Blackberry Farm in Tennessee and at Meadowood in

Napa Valley is better than the food at 98 percent of the world's restaurants. If I didn't know the chefs. I wouldn't bother showing up in the dining room. I'd iust eat their amazing cuisine in my room, where-and this is the best thing about ordering room service, no matter where I am-I don't even have to wear pants to dinner.





tongue swell, which stinging nettles will when eaten raw, but the aromatic greens become as docile as spinach with a little heat on them. "The word stinging is maybe challenging," says chef Renee Erickson, who uses nettles at The Whale Wins and her three other Seattle restaurants. "But once they're cooked, you're fine." That means a familiar texture, an earthy flavor, and limitless possibilities—starting, she says,

with these five. Use them...

- Sautéed as a wilted green with garlic and butter.
- 2. Draped over steamed clams.
- 3. Tossed into any pasta or stuffed into ravioli.
- 4. Simmered in ginger-nettle soup (as in Erickson's cookbook, A Boat, a Whale & a Walrus).
- 5. Blanched, then blended into a pesto with fresh parsley and walnuts.

crisp, grassy-tasting curlicue ferns-are the ultimate forager's vegetable, sprouting in the woods of New England. "These days there's less and less that you feel is truly seasonal, 'cause you can walk into your Whole Foods and see everything 365 days a year," says Tony Maws, chef at Craigie on Main in Cambridge, Massachusetts. 'Since fiddleheads are truly wild, you've got this short window of time and then they're gone. That's it." As soon as you spot them at vour local market. buy two pounds. Once you've trimmed and cleaned them, you can steam your fiddles, fry them, grill them, or do as Maws does and roast them in

delicious duck fat.

Fiddleheads-the

To prepare...

> Heat your oven to 400 degrees.

> Melt two tablespoons of rendered duck fat in a heavy roasting pan.

- > Add the ferns and toss with the fat, a finely diced shallot, and a chopped garlic clove.
- > Roast in the oven until tender, about eight to ten minutes. Toss occasionally.
- Serve with any grilled meat.

Rhubarb's Savory Side

Q. What the hell can I do with **rhubarb** besides put it in a pie? A. You can do as chef Jonathan Wu does at his irreverent New York restaurant, Fung Tu, and make an

Easter-worthy stirfry with rice. "Slice the rhubarb up into half-moons and then stir-fry it with some lamb," Wu says. "And for vegetables. since we're talking spring, we've got morels in the house. We've got the fiddles. You could do a fricassee, kinda like a French stir-fry of all these vegetables With fava beans? My goodness. Peas? Now we're talking.

Spring

Cooking

After suffering through months

we're psyched to eat anything... green. So we asked chefs

how to take the season's first

signs of veggie life from the dirt to the dinner plate

of turnip-sized snowballs and snowball-sized turnips,

Green tops:

Use these "like you'd make creamed spinach," he says, "where they're blanched and shocked and chopped very fine and mixed with mascarpone cheese."

White bottoms:

These you're gonna mince and pickle. Pour four parts vinegar, one part sugar, one part pickling spice, and a half part salt into a saucepan. Boil. Simmer for five minutes. Cool, strain, and pour the liquid over the ramps in a clean Mason jar. Use them as a hit of acid in sautéed vegetables. "A mushroom ragout with pickled ramps is a beautiful dish," Gillespie says, "because you're really articulating all the flavors of the earth." -NICK MARINO

INTRODUCING Lincoln Black Label Living EXPRESSIONS OF A **NEW KIND OF LUXURY** Garrett Leight, founder of Garrett Leight Eyewear, has always been inspired by iconic characters and sumptuous design like that of Lincoln Black Label. But his main inspiration comes from the place he grew up: Venice Beach in the '90s. "It's what I know. Los Angeles is the entertainment hub. For me, it's about the dichotomy of the surfing life and movie sets, and all the quirky things that come with both." To celebrate the launch of Lincoln Black Label, we asked Leight for his take on our Center Stage

BLACK

vehicle theme.

Pictured here: The Center Stage Lincoln Black Label MKZ



Image Maker To Leight, "luxury is about freedom to do what you want. In design, it's about adding a twist here and there to something that might be regarded as classic, so you're creating a new kind of classic." This was exactly the kind of thinking that went into the Center Stage vehicle theme, which has its own unique twist: Foxfire Red Alcantara accents.

MODERN HERITAGE

A designer's dream, this high-contrast black-and-white interior is highlighted by Crimson stitching and Argento" wood trim.

INDULGENCE

Uncommonly soft, beautiful leather adds richness and depth to the interior, while Ziricote wood—usually reserved for high-end yachts and fine musical instruments—adds warmth without the need for dyes or stains.

OASIS

Specialty Venetian leather, premium Alcantara* and rich wood would look great in any home—and any luxury vehicle.

CENTER STAGE

This Jet-Black leather interior, complete with Foxfire Red Alcantara* accents, is for those with a flair for the dramatic.

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Annual detailing, remote vehicle drop-off and pick-up, a designated experience liaison and a premium maintenance plan are just a few of the benefits offered with Lincoln Black Label membership.



BLACK LABEL

With a curated collection of designer vehicle themes—meticulously brought to life in rare, high-end materials—and a host of exclusive privileges, this is more than luxury ownership. It's membership. To learn more, visit lincoln.com/blacklabel



Travel > Adios, Rental Car—Hello, Bike-cation

Now that cities are becoming more bike-friendly—especially these three—you've got a better chance of stumbling on something unexpectedly awesome if you're on two wheels. Bonus: You'll get fitter—and you'll never miss the lines at Avis

San Francisco

4.0 MILES

Yes, we know, the hills. But ask any Bay Area biker and he'll tell you there's a way-quite literally-around them: the Wiggle, a miraculous little pipeline between the Mission and Haight neighborhoods that allows one to bypass basically all inclines. Lucky for you, its route is hardly a secret: You just follow the signs. Start your ride at Mission Bicycle (you can rent by the day), then head up to menswear gold mines Taylor Stitch or **Unionmade** to grab a sweater-San Francisco's microclimate problem is real. Now get on the Wiggle on your way to Rooky Ricardo's Records, a neighborhood gem, and continue on to The Progress (you called ahead for a table, right?) to carb up for the ride home. Lock up at Zeitgeist or Brass Tacks (or both!) for a wellearned drink before you call it a night. -BYARD DUNCAN

You won't be riding alone out there.

2
A many-tentacled

A many-tentacled dish at The Progress, the new spot from the folks at State Bird Provisions.

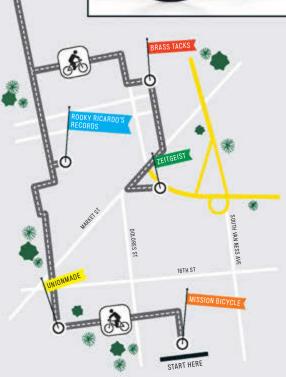
Unionmade is a Mission-area favorite for high-end threads.

Stop at two-year-old Brass Tacks for some of the city's best libations.



The Vintage Racer • Thomas Callahan hand-builds his Horse Cycles bikes in a shop in Brooklyn, but don't hold it against him: He does the cliché right. His steel-alloy frames balance '60s golden-age nostalgia with highend craftsmanship. Just add a leather Brooks saddle and brace for envy.

From \$1,400











Travel

2 of 2

Minneapolis



The Eye-Catcher

Some bike designers obsess over handlebar shapes; Lorenzo Martone focuses on color. His buzzy new line, Martone Cycling Co., skips the boring color combos and makes the most of mattes and gloss.

From \$1,100 | martonecycling.com



First of all, you're going in the summer, when the university's let out and the sun is hot and you can enjoy Minneapolis for what it really is: one of the coolest small cities in the country. That's thanks in part to U of M's postgrad pull-ex-students tend to stick around, and the packed restaurants and bars are all part of that community. Hit up Nice Ride, the city's bike-share program, near your hotel downtown, then head for the banks of the Mississippi, which is lined for miles with

bike paths. Grab lunch at Spoonriver, an organic café in the old Mill District, then shoot down the riverfront to Birchwood Cafe for a pick-me-up. Roll across the river to take a look at the campus-especially the modernismobsessed Weisman Art Museum-then grab a table at Restaurant Alma and settle in for the night. If you've got it in you, Marvel Bar, back across the river, serves up mad-scientist nightcaps, and you won't want to bike anymore after you've had one.-MARK BYRNE



The Weisman Art Museum is as impressive to look at as it is inside.

The bar at Restaurant Alma is the best seat in town.



Museum

4. Restaurant Alma

5. Marvel Bar

Montreal

7.5 MILES

Here, as in its European motherland, hopping on a bike (try Ça Roule Montréal for rentals) is the best way to traverse the city like a local. Start at Le Petit Hôtel, a high-end boutique right near the river, then cut over toward the Mile End neighborhood on Rue Berri. Montreal has enough Old World charm to make up for drab Toronto, but it's also got the New World convenience of wide avenues and bike lanes. So head west for breakfast at L'Artiste Affamé, your first stop along the way, but cut yourself

off so you can re-up at **Pâtisserie au** Kouign-Amann, just down the road. Roll around the quaint hoods for the afternoon, then hit an early, très-French dinner at Maison Publique. Eat all the foie gras. **Baldwin** Barmacie is your last stop of the night, before you take Rue Saint-Urbain all the way home.-M.B.

Forget your scarf?
Duck into Clark Street Mercantile.

You'll never want to leave the loft-like rooms at Le Petit Hôtel, but you should.





2. L'Artiste Affamé

3. Pâtisserie au Kouign-Amann 4. Maison Publique

5. Clark Street Mercantile

6. Baldwin Barmacie





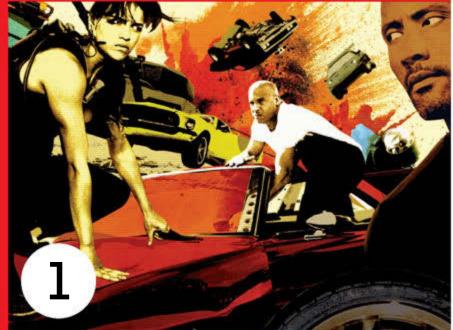
The New-School Cruiser

California's State Bicycle Co. city bikes ride the line between functional and twee, but they ride it smoothly. You might balk at the bottle opener on the seat tube now, but you're one brew away from being damn glad it's there.

From \$390 | statebicycle.com



PunchList



Vehicles Destroyed

86

Js → 5
6
9
20
21
25

Total Dollar Amount Wagered on Races

\$1,150,000

Thelma & Louise Moments Times a character willingly drives off a cliff



Close-ups of a Gear-Shifting Forearm

188

Absurdly Caricatured Ethnic Gangs, by Movie



The Fast and the Furious Vietnamese, based in Little Saigon



2 Fast 2 Furious Argentine and Cuban



Tokyo Drift



Fast & Furious
Mexican



Fast Five Brazilian



Fast & Furious 6 Poncey Brits



Count the Ways the Furious Franchise Kicks

Asphalt

As Furious 7 screeches into theaters, a numerical tribute to the series that keeps gettin' better



Top Two Moments in Creatively Brutal Torture

1. Drug lord does that rat-in-ahot-bucket thing!

2. Gang leader makes a man drink gasoline.



And Now, a Ranking of Notably Huge Necks

Vin Diesel
This random from the sixth movie

Times Our Heroes Should Have Died—But Miraculously Didn't

•The Fast and the Fu

• The Fast and the Furi	ous → 6
• 2 Fast 2 Furious →	2
• Tokyo Drift →	4
• Fast & Furious →	9
• Fast Five →	6
• Fast & Furious 6 →	11



Girl-on-Girl Moments, by Type

Lady make-out sessions

Lady fight



Get Inside the Many Heads of Tatiana Maslany



→ Orphan Black is doing for sci-fi what Game of Thrones did for fantasy, pretty much entirely because of Canadian actress Tatiana Maslany. She's played twelve different characters (and earned one . Golden Globe nom) for the BBC America show—but we can't aet enough of just plain old her. —I AUREN I ARSON

If you could play every lead character on another show, what would it be? Orange Is the New Black! I love all those characters so much; I think they're all so unique and so great and weird.

You seem pretty sweet, but you play some real hard-asses.

Regardless of how I come off on the outside, those things exist in all of us. [Killer Ukrainian] Helena's definitely a part of me, and [ruthless corporatist]

Rachel for sure is a part of me, but maybe not the socially acceptable part that I reveal on a day-to-day basis.

Were you into sci-fi before this? I'm really into Futurama. That's

kind of the extent of my sci-fi. And I guess Buffy, if that counts.

You do a bunch of great accents. Any favorites? I really like the Ukrainian one. It's not that we're necessarily being super true to how somebody actually sounds. We have fun with it.

Once, during your cameo on Parks and Rec, Aziz Ansari tried to seduce you with a fake British accent do you have a thing for them?

I love accents. I think that Aziz doing a British accent was very charming.

So he had a shot? He did! He's hilarious.



WHAT WOULD HOT JESUS DO? Divine the

All-Time Sexiest Christ

Lady-killing Jesus! Still a thing, per NBC's new beefcake J.C. Here, a Jesussteezus ranking:



DIOGO MORGADO Portuguese ex-model. History Channel's 'The Bible



JIM CAVIEZEL 2004's 'The Passion of the Christ'



Argentine star of NBC's 'A.D. The Bible Continues'



Hot, literally and ecclesiastically

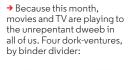


STREAM ME! 'Daredevil' on Netflix

Now with 100 percent less Ben Affleck!



6-8 NERDTOPIA Let Your Geek Flag(s) Fly





For Sci-Fi Nerds Ex Machina (in theaters April 10)

Let's enjoy smirkingly hostile, exquisitely dickish Oscar Isaac performances while we still can, right? Soon Star Wars will certify him as the charismatic, swashbuckling action icon he was probably always destined to be. But Ex Machina, in which Isaac plays a deranged Steve Jobs type living in a bunker and siccing sexy robots on poor Domhnall Gleeson, shows a different side of the actor, one familiar from Inside Llewyn Davis and A Most Violent Year: comically sinister, intriquingly dangerous, and not even remotely nice.—ZACH BARON



For Bio-Chem Nerds The Emperor of All Maladies (PBS)

The new Ken Burns documentary at once "unspeakably depressing and indescribably hopeful, as one children's cancer clinic is described in the film. You're not a bad person if six hours of cancer talk sounds pretty heavy—the stories from patients and their families will have you struggling to hold it together. But the three installments, based on the Pulitzer-winning book, make for a seriously compelling historical parrativeand some treatments-of-vore footage proves how truly far we've come.-LAUREN LARSON

MARY EVANS/EVERETT COLLECTION; COURTESY OF JOE ALBLAS/LIGHT WORKERS

JOE ALBLAS/A&E/EVERETT

OF BBC AMERICA. 3) FROM TOP:



For Stand-up Nerds Silicon Valley (HBO)

Kumail Nanjiani, star of Mike Judge's start-up satire, has seen all of the Lord of the Rings movies at least ten times. Hobbit-off!

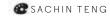
If Gandalf can call giant eagles, why can't he do that first, so he and Frodo can fly to Mordor?

"Well. Part of the reason why they send hobbits in the first place is that they need to use stealth! If Sauron's eye saw giant eagles flying, he would send the Nazgûl to take them out pretty quickly. Also I think Peter Jackson realized that talking eagles are really goofy."



For History Nerds Wolf Hall (BBC)

Codpiece thyself! Because an apoplectic Damian Lewis in dick armor—based on the bestselling dick-armor book of the same name—is the best reason to get into this tale of Tudor-era political backstabbery, Sure. this richly costumed miniseries lacks the book's plodding interior monologue of its antihero lawyer Thomas Cromwell, the sixteenth century's version of Karl Rove. But it atones by having stage titan Mark Rylance in the role. So stream on, ye fiends of the infernal pit!—SARAH BALL



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IMMORTAL-OFF

Compare the Prose Stylings of Two Goddesses **■** WARD SUTTON



Toni Morrison

whispered. Was she hallucinating? If not, surely the girl had gone for help. Nobody, not the mentally disabled or the genetically violent, would leave her there. Would they? Suddenly, as they hadn't in the dark, the surrounding trees coming alive in the dawn really scared her, and the silence was terrifying.

from God Help the Child, the newest book from the Nobel and Pulitzer winner, which focuses on childhood trauma



—publisher Rizzoli on the contents of Kim Kardashian's much hyped new book, Selfish, about her fame as "a trailblazer of the 'selfie movement'





02-04 GREAT READS Relive the Past in Three Trippy Ways



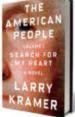
SO THAT HAPPENED: A MEMOIR

by Jon Cryer An infinitely quotable behind-the-scenes (behind-the-Sheens?) look at showbiz. Now "Duckie" will be asked to do every film-school grad speech until he dies.



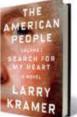
THE DEAD LANDS

bu Benjamin Percu This brutal postapocalyptic Lewis and Clark redux is The Road on bath salts.



THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: VOLUME 1

bu Larru Kramer A raunchy, epic revision of U.S. history—a jilted John Wilkes Booth murders Abe Lincoln after the president turns down a manly threesome.



06 THE KING OF

QUEENS Marvel at the Modesty of Rapper Action Bronson



Make Some Noise for a Retired Beastie Boy's Comic Turn

→ Adam Horovitz is squinting at the giant font on his phone. "I have that shit as big as possible," he says sadly. Once, back when he was known as Ad-Rock, he roamed the world with the Beastie Boys. Now he appears in the new Noah Baumbach movie, While We're Young.—ZACH BARON

Are Beastie Boys

We're done. Adam Yauch started the band. It's not like a thing where we could continue without him.

How are you coping with the fact that the band that you were in your entire life no longer exists? Since high school, I was in this band. And then to have it last for so long, you know-

that's who I am and what I did forever. So now I'm just trying to figure it out.

Is that a fun challenge?

The scale tips way more to the very sad and depressed. And the fun thinking about it, you know, happens sometimes.

In While We're Young, you play a middle-aged Brooklyn dad who counsels Ben Stiller's character to act his age. Do you see the irony in that? Well, I know that I'm the guy from the Beastie Boys, but I'm not really the guy from the Beastie Boys. But I see what you're saying. Why not?

One big theme of the film is aging and trying to handle that fact with dignity.

Do you relate?

For me personally, that's never really been an issue. You know, like: "The kids today with their whatever music I was doing that before these people were doing that." I guess I got over that a long time ago.

You and Mike Diamond are working on a book? My big idea was to have our friends tell the story. And then we started reading it back, and it was really bad. So I was just like, "Me and Mike need to write it, because, you know—no offense to Morrissey's friends. but you'd rather read what Morrissey

is saying than what

We're still in early

be out for a while.

Morrissey's friends...

stages. It's not gonna

→ The mountainous Albanian-American trash-talker (né Arian Asllani), whose album Mr. Wonderful is out now, briefed us on his surprising pan-athleticism.

> "My jumper is soaking wet from everywhere on the floor. I'm a championship softball and baseball player. I'm really good at billiards, darts, shuffleboard. I'm the Björn Borg of table tennis. And I'm one of the most talented lefthanded hitters ever."



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> What If Sarah Palin

Were a Brain Surgeon?



polls, Carson—seen

here in Kentucky has run ahead of Jeb

Bush, Chris Christie, and Ted Cruz.

ON THE NIGHT earlier this year that Barack Obama stepped before the nation to deliver his sixth State of the Union address, Ben Carson-a political newcomer who harbors dreams of soon giving his first-settled into a sofa. He was eager to hate everything the president was about to say. calvinkleinbeauty.com macy's and macys.com

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 Though he's a hero in the black community, Carson's political constituency today is much paler.

POLITICS

Carson had come to the Capitol Hill home of Armstrong Williams, a conservative media impresario who officially serves as Carson's business manager and who lately has functioned as Carson's unofficial image-maker and political adviser as well. As the two men turned to the TV, they began dissecting Obama's performance.

"He looks good," Williams said. "He looks clean. Shirt's white. The tie. He looks elegant."

"Like most psychopaths," Carson grumbled. "That's the way they look. They all look great."

For those unfamiliar with the mood of America's far right, branding the president a psychopath is exactly the sort of talk that strikes a chord—and just the thing that has made Carson a sensation in the GOP. Today the former pediatric neurosurgeon—who's never run for elected office—is suddenly besting candidates like Jeb, Marco, and Rand in some 2016 polls and preparing to announce his campaign for the White House. As for the current resident, well, Carson is sometimes encouraged to cut him just a little slack.

"He faces the same challenges you will face," Williams said of the president on TV. "He's gotta convince people to believe him. That's all he's doing; selling his narrative."

"But he knows he's telling a lie!" Carson vented. "He's trying to sell what he thinks is not true! He's sitting there saying, 'These Americans are so stupid I can tell them anything."

Since his entry into politics two years ago, Carson has defined himself chiefly as a rhetorical bomb-thrower. He's invoked bestiality and pedophilia while arguing against gay marriage. And he's railed against the forces of government, declaring that Obamacare is "the worst thing that has happened in this nation since slavery" and,

in fact, "is slavery in a way." Similarly outrageous was his contention that "we live in a Gestapo age" and that America today is "very much like Nazi Germany."

This time next year, in the thick of the primaries, such wild statements could sink a candidate. Not so in these hurlyburly months before the race begins in earnest. Indeed, it's in these early days of the campaign-before armies of political professionals descend and campaign contributions skyrocket-when a familiar sort of long shot can thrive. And among a certain segment of the GOP, Ben Carson is thriving. Yes, his chances for winning may be slim, but activists on the right hope that at the very least, Carson will give voice to a conservative anger that'll influence the rest of the GOP field. "He might not be king," Williams says of Carson, "but he will have the ear of the king."

Of course, one big way Carson differs from most quixotic right-wing ideologues is his race. Conservatives, long frustrated that their disgust with Obama and his policies is regarded as racist, no doubt find it politically advantageous—and psychologically helpful—to have a black person offering those critiques. As one GOP fundraising guru told *Time*, "There's nothing they love more than a black candidate who agrees with them on conservative views."

Carson's restrained manner helps a lot, too. Though his outrage can be excessive, it's never spittle-flecked. Rather, he speaks in the dulcet and intelligent tones of a surgeon reassuring parents that although their child has brain cancer, he has the power to heal her. He shrewdly camouflages his vitriol as wisdom, dismisses those who disagree as fools, and perhaps more than any other far-right candidate in recent years, gives establishment Republicans heartburn. They are, after all,

eager to coronate an electable candidate to run against Hillary Clinton—not get drawn into a fractious fight with a Tea Party rock star who forces the eventual GOP nominee to the unelectable fringe. "When I call my mom back home, she asks me, 'What do you think of Dr. Ben Carson?' "one top Republican operative lamented to me. "I tell her he's not ready to be president, and she gets so mad at me."

Even among Carson's team, though, there's some recognition that he could benefit from a little polish. The morning of the president's State of the Union, Carson had spent five hours getting briefed on domestic and foreign policy at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative Washington think tank. But on the night of Obama's speech, the task of getting Carson ready for the White House fell to Williams alone. He'd arranged for Carson to appear on cable news to offer some post-speech commentary and was busily prepping the doctor.

"We don't have to call him a psychopath. I don't want you to go to CNN with that kind of mood," Williams cautioned.

To groom Carson in more literal ways, Williams had also hired a barber to come to his home and cut Carson's hair. That way, when he offered his assessment of Obama on TV, he'd look, as Williams put it, "presidential." The barber took maybe a millimeter off the top before he asked Williams about Carson's goatee. "I'm gonna leave that alone," Williams said. "We'll revisit it one day, but not today. I pick my battles. He likes that goatee. But do you know a president who's been elected with a goatee?"

"IN THE UNITED STATES, we have Republicans, Democrats, and independents. What do you have?" Carson asked.

He was waiting in a lounge at the Newark airport this past December for a

THE HATCHERY/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

flight to Tel Aviv-a trip that's become, in recent years, a prerequisite for any presidential aspirant. Carson had never been to Israel before, and now, as he sat across from the young Israeli woman who'd be his guide, he was getting a head start on what he called his "fact-finding mission." The more basic the facts, the better.

The woman told Carson that there were Labor and Likud and a host of other. smaller parties in the Knesset. "And what is the role of the Knesset?" he interjected, referring to the country's legislature. Carson is a tall, dignified-looking man with a placid, almost sleepy face. He paid close attention to the primer on Israeli politics. "It sounds complex," he finally said. "Why don't they just adopt the system we have?"

Sparse as Carson's foreign policy bona fides may be, the trip was devised to bolster them. And although he wasn't able to secure a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, he and his entourage-consisting of his wife, Candy; Williams; and a handful of aides and their spouses-visited the Western Wall, lit a menorah with the mayor of Jerusalem, and drove to the Golan Heights for what was billed as a "geopolitical strategic briefing." But the three members of the Israeli Defense Forces assigned to give it—a portly male lieutenant colonel in the medical corps and two twentysomething female soldiers from the public-affairs unit—didn't seem to be at risk of revealing classified information. The briefing took place on Mount Bental, a tourist destination with coin-operated binoculars and a decent view into Syria. As he explained the nearby civil war, the lieutenant colonel claimed that most of the Islamist fighters weren't Syrian but came from Morocco and Europe. "It's just like the troublemakers in Ferguson," Carson said, betraying his habit of wedging the unfamiliar into a context he understands.

The lieutenant colonel tried to direct Carson to a city in the distance where some of the war's fiercest fighting has raged. But Carson seemed just as interested in his own location-and whether he was safely under the cover of Israel's vaunted missiledefense system. "Is this area right here protected by the Iron Dome?" he wondered.

The next day, Carson was standing on a pleasant hillside outside Jerusalem; a shepherd tended his flock of sheep in the distance. Carson heard some noise from a construction site, and he flinched. "Was that machine-gun fire?" he asked.

HOW CARSON WOUND UP in Israel contemplating the hazards of the Middle East is one of the unlikelier stories in recent American politics. A little more than two years ago, Carson was merely a doctor

nearing retirement. But then he was asked to speak at the National Prayer Breakfast, an annual apolitical gathering where Carson, a devout Seventh-Day Adventist, was expected to give a typically anodyne speech. Instead, he decided to talk about what a mess the United States had become under Barack Obama. With the president sitting just to his right, Carson compared America to ancient Rome. "They destroyed themselves from within," he warned. "Moral decay. Fiscal irresponsibility."

Obama didn't appear to enjoy Carson's attack, his thin smile gradually turning into a frown. Carson has studied the president's reaction on video. "I thought in the beginning he was much more animated," Carson told me. "He was laughing along with his wife. She continued to laugh while he got quiet beside her, and then it looked like he was texting. I think he was texting her, because after he did that, she stopped."

Carson hadn't uttered anything other Republicans hadn't said before. The difference was that Carson delivered his message mere feet from Obamaand that his skin is the same color as the president's. Later that week The Wall Street Journal ran an editorial titled "Ben Carson for President." "Would you ever run for president, sir?" Sean Hannity asked Carson during what would become one of his countless Fox News interviews. "I'd vote for you in a heartbeat."

His 2012 book, America the Beautiful, which sold fewer than 2,000 copies in the six weeks before the Prayer Breakfast, sold almost 60,000 copies in the six weeks after. He hastily wrote-or rather, dictated-another tome, One Nation, which outsold Hillary Clinton's Hard Choices. "God speaks through him, and it goes into that Dragon"-Carson's voice-recognition software-"and we have a best-seller," Candy, who serves as her husband's book researcher, told me. Armstrong Williams offers a less exalted rationale. "He is a hot property. His brand is huge right now."

But long before he was a mega-star to the Tea Party, Carson was a bona fide hero in the black community. He grew up poor in Detroit, raised by a mother who had dropped out of school after the third grade. Nonetheless, she required her two sons to read two books a week and write reports (never mind that she could barely read them). Her boys became star students.

Carson went to Yale and then med school. In 1984, when he was 33, he became the head of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, then the youngest-and the first African-American—to lead a division at the prestigious hospital. He quickly earned a reputation as a daring surgeon, and in 1987,

A Doctor Feelgood Story

Before he made the Tea Party swoon, Ben Carson's inspiring rags-to-scrubs tale made him a star.



The Inspirational Memoir

"People who were very well versed in literature said: 'This book is amazing. This is going to be a classic," Carson told The Washington Post. "I was a little skeptical, but they were right." Published in 1990, it has sold roughly 2 million copies.



The Comedic Cameo

 Playing himself in 2003's Stuck on You, about conjoined twins, Carson punched up the script by adding a laugh line that made it into the film.



The Cinematic Melodrama

In 2009, Cuba Gooding Jr. starred in Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story. The Hollywood Reporter said the adoration was a little much. "A modest and unassuming portrait this is not."

Carson performed one of the most storied operations in medical history by separating a pair of Siamese twins joined at the back of the head. It was the first time such a surgery had been successful, and it made international headlines. "I knew that my life was going to change after that, because the media isn't completely stupid," Carson says now. "They'd start looking at my background and they'd say, 'Whaaaaaat?'"

Carson's greatest fame came in the African-American community. He started a foundation to help black students, and his memoir, Gifted Hands, became required reading for African-American kids. "My mother gave me a copy," recalls Joshua DuBois, the Obama White House's former director of faith-based initiatives, "and said, 'This man is a symbol of how you need to be looking at your life." In 1994, when Essence magazine honored a group of black male role models, the

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handful of icons they chose included Jesse Jackson, Spike Lee, Eddie Murphy, Denzel Washington, and Ben Carson.

WHILE IT'S TRUE that Carson possesses rare attributes his opponents can't claim, the doctor's résumé is glaringly thin in certain spots. During one of our conversations, I asked him about his lack of political experience. What if Barack Obama, I posited with a bit of hyperbole, decided to change careers and said that he now wanted to be a neurosurgeon-and, what's more, that he wanted his first operation to be separating conjoined twins? Did Carson see any parallels between that hypothetical and his situation? "No," he said emphatically. "Just the fact that you would ask that question tells me that you don't understand all that's involved in becoming a neurosurgeon. There's so much more than becoming a political figure, it's not even in the same ballpark."

Carson is rarely shy telling others that they're foolish. With both the stereotypical arrogance of a surgeon and the understandable brio of a self-made man, he seems to harbor an unshakable belief that he knows more than most anyone else. But while being president may seem simple to him, running for the job is invariably tough—and already the limits of Carson's political acumen show. For instance, though he's answered criticism about his lack of experience by promising to rely heavily on his advisers, he has little notion of who or what he'd be looking for in his cabinet. When I asked him which secretary of state he most admired, he replied Condoleezza Rice-who, of course, happened to be the most recent person to hold that post in a Republican administration. Similarly, Robert Gates was Carson's favorite secretary of defense. And when I asked Carson to name his favorite secretary of the treasury, he was stumped. "Andrea Mitchell's husband," he eventually offered. I reminded him that Mitchell's husband, also known as Alan Greenspan, had actually been chairman of the Federal Reserve. "I don't know that there's anybody that really stands out to me as an outstanding treasury secretary. I mean, that's a pretty hard place to be outstanding," he finally said. "Secretaries of the treasury, for the most part, are not big policy people."

By his own admission, Carson's serious interest in Republican politics is rather recent. As a young man, he was a "radical, wild-eyed, left-wing Democrat" who crossed over to the right during the Reagan years before becoming an independent. He only rejoined the GOP last year as a matter of convenience. "If I weren't thinking about running for office, I would remain an independent," he told me.

Carson's ideology of late appears to have been formed in the fever swamps of rightwing websites and Fox News. He's taken the same sincere up-by-the-bootstraps message of self-empowerment that he once preached to black children and grafted it onto a worldview promulgated largely on conservative talk radio-validating many of the most provocative sentiments popular on the far right by repeating them in his mellifluous tone. He's that rarest of breeds: a soft-spoken demagogue.

Several times, I tried to get Carson to concede that his analogy likening the U.S. to Nazi Germany was out of line (he's said that Americans under Obama are as intimidated and afraid to criticize their government as Germans under the Third Reich). But he refused to give any ground. My longest conversation with Carson on the mat-

ter came at Yad Vashem, the museum in Jerusalem devoted to the Holocaust, where Carson laid a wreath and presumably contemplated the barbarity of the Nazis. Did any of this prompt him to reconsider his comparison, I asked, "Not at all," he said. "It makes it even stronger."

THE MOST DISCOMFITING part of Carson's campaign, and the one that holds the most peril, will be his handling of race. For as much as race has made him a star in Republican politics, the way he's courted that attention is what most threatens his standing among African-Americans. And unlike the parade of black conservatives who have momentarily burned bright during the Age of Obama, Carson, when it comes to his place in African-American life, actually has something to lose.

Already he's adopted positions that vex the black community. He's become a booster of GOP-backed voter-ID laws-which many African-Americans view as an effort to disenfranchise them but that Carson, citing largely discredited anecdotes of voter fraud, argues are necessary. And then there's Barack Obama, whose 95 percent share of the African-American vote Carson mainly attributes to ignorance. "I remember one of the man-on-the-street interviews with Jesse Watters"—the Fox News producer who does ambush interviews for Bill O'Reilly-"where he went to Harlem and he was asking people about Obama's policies, except they were all McCain's policies," Carson says. "And they were, like, 'Oh yeah, it's brilliant!' 'What do you think of his vice presidential candidate, Sarah Palin?' 'Oh, she's the best!' I think a lot of people are like that." (Like those voter-fraud anecdotes, this appears to be a figment of Carson's imagination: Fox News denies that such a segment ever aired.)

All of this is painful for African-Americans like Ta-Nehisi Coates, one of America's most celebrated writers on race who is grateful to Carson for encouraging young blacks like him. Growing up in Baltimore, Coates heard Carson speak many times. "I'll always be in debt to him, but in terms of who he is now, I don't quite understand that," Coates says. "It seems like Barack Obama is the exact sort of

Carson validates many of the most provocative sentiments on conservative radio by repeating them in his mellifluous tone. He's that rarest of breeds: a softspoken demagogue.

person he'd have wanted us to grow up to be." When I mentioned Coates's criticism to Carson, he betrayed no discomfort. "It doesn't surprise me," he said, "because people grow up and they listen to propaganda."

One morning in Israel, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Carson crossed paths with members of a black Baptist church from Brooklyn. Upon the discovery that the man in the North Face fleece was none other than Dr. Ben Carson, all heck broke loose. Carson was besieged. He posed for pictures and doled out hugs. "Is it all right if I touch you?" one woman said.

I asked Nadine Clarke, the group's leader, how she knew who Carson was. "I've known about him for years!" she exclaimed. When I brought up Carson's new political career, the smile vanished from her face, replaced by a look of worry, as if she now remembered some of the things Carson had said in the past two years. "He's a Republican?" she asked.

Carson said good-bye and headed to a skiff on the Sea of Galilee. As the boat puttered along, he fell into a reverie about how Jesus had walked on these waters and taught his disciples to be fishers of men here. I interrupted with my own, more earthly concerns. What had he thought of the church group?

"They seemed like typical Brooklyn folk. Very nice," Carson said. He was unfazed by all the fuss. "I'm pretty used to that reaction once they figure out who I am."

Will they vote for you? I asked.

He paused for a moment and looked out on the water. "No," Carson said, "I don't imagine that a lot of them would."

JASON ZENGERLE is GQ's political correspondent.

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KING OF THE WORLD by David Remnick (1998)

The greatest boxer of all time got treatment from a narrative-journalism heavyweight. The Champ had been written about as much as any athlete ever. But David Remnick did more than tell a story narrowly focused on Ali's individual experiences with victory and vice. Rather, he crafted a broad social and political narrative, then placed the boxer within it. It's a biography of a man as much as it is a biography of a myth—"an American myth," Remnick writes, "who has come to mean many things to many people: a symbol of faith, a symbol of conviction and defiance, a symbol of beauty and skill and courage, a symbol of racial pride, of wit and love,"



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Andre Agassi

OPEN by Andre Agassi (2009)



This is the psychologistcouch confessional (that's really how Agassi and his collaborator, J. R. Moehringer, worked through it) that all great sports books strive to be. The abuse of youth training; the depths of disappointment and heights of ecstasy, recounted with acuity; the comings-clean of celebrity dating and crystal meth. (It will put you at ease that you were never the star athlete you'd hoped you'd be.) This would be a crazy book from any athlete; that it's from one of the most talented and popular tennis players in history makes it all the more irresistible.



O 3 ATHLETES SANDY

Should Read

SANDY KOUFAX: A LEFTY'S LEGACY by Jane Leavy (2002)

It will make you fall back in love with baseball. In addition to being unflappable in demeanor, insurmountable in technical talent, and impenetrable in his personal privacy, Sandy Koufax pitched arguably the greatest game of all time. And it's the interplay of these braided narratives-the life story of one of the best-ever lefties and the granular ticktock of his perfect outing in September 1965-that gives Jane Leavy's bio cinematic lift. Koufax was a model of high-order talent and humility, and this book is a blueprint for living a life driven by both those virtues.

96 GQ.COM APRIL 2015

CREW. GROUNTOWN GREW.



INCE)MBARDI

WHEN PRIDE STILL MATTERED by David Maraniss (1999)



He's the best-known football coach of all time. But his brand of leadership transcended his profession. At times he sounded like a general, a lawyer, a priest, and he might've been any of those, too. That universality lifted him to the status of deity-the most

quoted and misquoted sports figure ever. This book roots him in his rightful place. Come for the football; stay for the nuanced "everything" that "winning isn't."



Zlatan Ibrahimović

I AM ZLATAN by Zlatan Ibrahimović (2012)



No book serves as a more efficient gateway drug to soccer fandom than this one. If Andre's is the shrinkcouch confessional, Zlatan's is the barstool confessional. Ibrahimović is one of the world's best soccer playersand easily its most colorful. Born in

a Swedish housing project, he's a brutish attacker with unmatched instincts for goal-scoring. As well, he loves fast cars, reggae, body tats, trash-talking, calling things "advanced bullshit," and speaking in the third person. Even more fantastic is the fact that he put out the book when he was mid-career. He divulged all his secrets and burned all his bridges, even though he'd have to cross back over them again. He'd be your favorite athlete if he lived in America (which really could be his next stop).

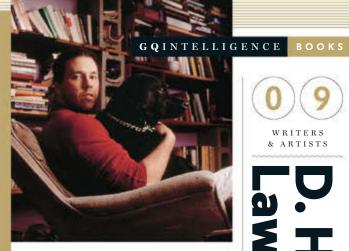
O 6 ATHLETES

FOE DIMAGGIO

JOE DIMAGGIO by Richard Ben Cramer (2000)



Joe DiMaggio was the ultimate ballplayer during the two decades-the '30s and '40s-when the national gravitation toward baseball and the wattage of its stars was greater than the current-day NFL, NBA, and Hollywood combined. (And then he went ahead and married Marilyn Monroe.) It doesn't take an extraordinary writer and researcher to make Joe DiMaggio's crazy mix of publicprivate come off, but Richard Ben Cramer happens to be one.



O O WRITERS & ARTISTS

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

EVERY LOVE STORY IS A GHOST STORY by D. T. Max (2012)

More than any other recent writer, DFW will go down as having influenced writers of future generations. As intelligent and inventive as any practitioner of both fiction and non-, he was purposefully enigmatic, some combination of glowing and wounded, prone to both witheringly awkward interviews and fantastic retorts. Wallace wrote about himself-more than he probably meant to—but he could only stare in the mirror so long before turning away, or worse. D. T. Max, his first of surely many biographers, picked up the pieces and turned the mirror into a window. We'll long be looking through it, seeking a glimpse.



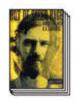
WRITERS & ARTISTS de Kooning

DE KOONING by Mark Stevens and Annalyn Swan (2004)

De Kooning's toilsome life defies all the stereotypes of what it means to be a "modern master." Sure, aspects of the Abstract Expressionist's life fit the bill of an artist's biography he made the scene at the Cedar Tavern with Rothko, Kline, and Rauschenberg, kept up an intense rivalry with Pollock, drank himself into the gutter, and swapped out lovers like painting aprons. But everything else about his story will force you to revise the way you think genius works. Learn to be great, but mostly learn to be patient. He'd grunt and scrape at his canvases for months at a time, painstakingly inching his way toward immortality.



& ARTISTS



RAGE by Geoff Dyer (1998)

This is the least conventional biography on the list. It's not really even a bio, is it? A book about the extraordinary English writer D. H. Lawrence, it's as much about Geoff Dyer's inability to write that book. We hear you; that sounds like an abysmal premise. But Dyer is in much greater and fantastically entertaining control than he lets on. What he finds in the gaps between his own life and his subject's yields writing on the kinds of human Q's & A's he (Lawrence) and he (Dyer) share with each other and any reader.





KEITH **RICHARDS**

LIFE by Keith Richards (2010)



Keith. Because: the Stones. Because: Mick Charlie Ronnie Brian Bill & Bobby, Because: Smack Jack & Coke, Because: Ronnie Anita & Patti. Because: Altamont Hyde Park & Nellcôte. Because: open G tuning & the blues. Because: Two bars of "Malagueña" and you're in. This is the best book ever written about sexdrugsrocknroll. Keith Richards is its Gabriel, because who else could it be?

00 MUSICIANS



I DREAMED I WAS A VERY CLEAN TRAMP by Richard Hell (2013)

Richard Hell

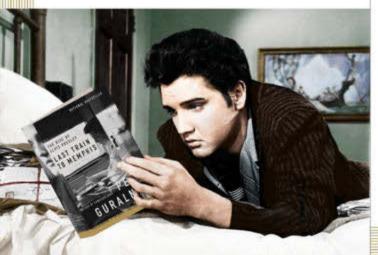
Punk rock was as much an attitude as a musical genre, and Hell was the man who first articulated the look. the sound, and the feel. He was also as good a writer as he was a musician—the poet laureate of punk, as proven line by line here. If you're interested in the history of rock 'n' roll, or of downtown New York, or of American cool, you need to read this book as much as you need to hear any of his records.

1 2 - 1 3 MUSICIANS

ELVIS

LAST TRAIN TO MEMPHIS by Peter Guralnick (1994) & CARELESS LOVE by Peter Guralnick (1999)

Elvis is among the most American of all Americans—up there with Abe Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and Henry Ford—and after this two-volume masterpiece, nobody needs to write his biography ever again. Just be forewarned: It gets dark. Goddamn, does it get dark. But it's a journey worth taking, because you begin to understand that Elvis is basically American Jesus—the sacrificial lamb who lived our national fall from grace. From guffawing mama's boy to pop king, to an inglorious death facedown in vomit beside the crapper at Graceland.



MO RR ISS



AUTOBIOGRAPHY by Morrissey (2013)

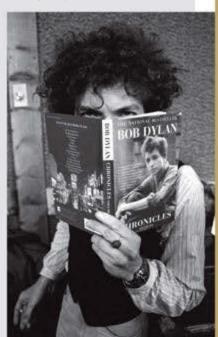
That voice-warbling, wounded, or spitting acid, and often all three at once-translates pitch-perfectly to the page, as Moz, in full-throated lyrical melodrama, relives the afflictions that created him: the knuckle-rapping horrors of Dickensian school days in gray Manchester, the elusive sexual promises of '70s alam and punk. the never-goodenough success of the Smiths, and pinch-me solo fame. Around every mundane corner, misery lurks in the form of judges, suits, and so-called friends as life, it seems, conspires to stifle him. Of course, life didn't.

1 6 MUSICIANS

Bob Dylan

CHRONICLES: VOLUME ONE by Bob Dylan (2004)

The most written-about songwriter of all time put an end to others' attempts by writing the weirdest, most wonderful version himself. Dozens of writers had tried before, but it took Dylan doing Dylan to get to the heart of it: impressionistic line-writing, fractured chronologies, rivers of metaphor, elliptical anecdotes, andfor those looking for a little more grounding than the poetry provides cameo-filled set pieces of the most satisfying sort. Rarely is there a moment when we learn how A led directly to B, but there's a concerted



effort to relate not how something was but how something felt/seemed/ appeared to have transpired. The sensation inside as a song began to blossom, the bite of winter slipping through his Village floorboards, the thinking made possible by a motorcycle ride along the bayou-in the present or in the past or whenever, it's hard to tell. We're never quite fixed in one place—it's one man seeing and feeling kaleidoscopically, the clearest sense yet of the life of that man. Better still: Volume two is still on the slate.



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1)ean Martin

DINO by Nick Tosches (1992)

Dino was the first tell-all about this inscrutable star—it's also the best. Tosches pulls no punches in this unauthorized biography, which traces the Rat Packer from his early days as Dino Crocetti, a teenage gambler in Ohio, to Dean Martin, a marquee name with a \$500 nose job, a cross-media sensation before "cross-media" was a thing. But Tosches is interested in more than fantastic celebrity; in unsparing detail, he traces Dino's sad, slow decline into a twilight of pills and booze. The result is a lesson in what not to do when you reach the end of your prime.





1 7 HOLLYWOOD

ROB LOWE

STORIES I ONLY TELL MY FRIENDS by Rob Lowe (2011)

Hardly any actors pull this off. It takes a lot of nerve to overhype your own celebrity memoir by calling it Stories I Only Tell My Friends. But Rob Lowe-Rob Lowe! the Handsome Guy from DirecTV ads! he was in Tommy Boy!—delivers on turning the inside way out. Lowe avoids the Chicken Soup sentimentalities that plague so many celeb memoirs and veers toward unflinching self-reflection and a tabloid reporter's eye—his own tabloid moments included. If every famous person told his tales the way Lowe does, the bookstore section with all the famous faces on the covers would be a much more appealing place to get lost.





Alfred Hitchcock

LIGHT by Patrick McGilligan (2003)

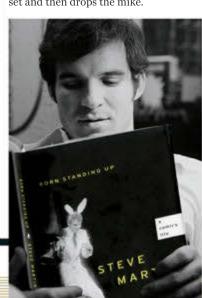
He's the most widely examined director of all time, and he's still wildly misunderstood. McGilligan's book is a master course for anyone interested in moviemaking, a boring-down into the relationships with Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, and company, and a more suitably complex building-out of the 2-D perversions (and stalker accusations) that have come to cloud his legacy in recent decades. It's a hugely big book that never feels long—the definitive take on the master.

2 0 HOLLYWOOD

RTIN

by Steve Martin (2007)

Steve Martin wrote it, and Steve Martin knows how to produce a flash bomb of comedy. Read it if you remember Martin's stand-up shtick in the '70s, but especially read it if you don't. Before he was a white-haired eminence who fathered brides and cheap dozens and novels about shopgirls, Martin was a hustler of the rarest quality-a showman who cut his teeth at Disneyland (!), who zagged in the face of every easier zig. Who struggled maniacally to perform with originality. That's always the best part of any movie, anyway, isn't it? The gritty hustle up the mountain. By the time sold-out arenas and Hollywood blockbusters roll around, Martin seems less to bask in his successes than be bored by them. It's a good lesson for a career and for a memoir: Get out while it's hot. Martin jams through his set and then drops the mike.



HOLLYWOOD

ROBERT **EVANS**

THE KID STAYS IN THE **PICTURE** by Robert Evans (1994)

Evans wrote the Great Hollywood Memoir. A "half-assed actor" in the '50s, he became the head of Paramount Pictures. Rosemary's Baby, Love Story, The Godfather, Chinatown that sort of rap sheet. He was the consummate Hollywood cad—kisser-and-teller of Gardners and MacGraws (he's been married seven times), wheeler-dealer of Marlons and Jacks, and film inspiration for Dustin Hoffman in Wag the Dog. He strove to be an unapologetic original, a true north he followed to heights from which he had a singular view of the industry. Today's straight-shooting, publicity-choked middle ground will make you restless once you've tasted this.**

**Listen to This Life

→ The Kid Stays in the Picture is the perfect book off which to pivot to mention that many of these biographies and memoirs are also exceptional audiobooks. Especially since actors and musicians very







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#VARYSEXY

Nalcolm X

2 2 TRAILBLAZERS

by Manning Marable (2011)



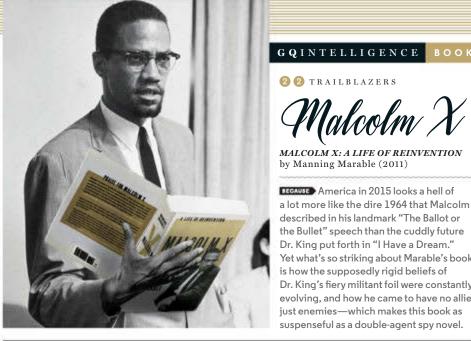
TRAILBLAZERS

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THEODORE REX by Edmund Morris (2001)

Teddy's life was so grandiose that this book, confined to merely his eight White House years, manages to amaze without even covering many of the hoary Roosevelt legends (cowboy days in the Dakotas, a heroic Rough Riders phase, that time he took a bullet to the chest but gave a speech anyway). America's youngest, most unusual president is 42 when he begins warring against Wall Street monopolies, creating national parks, and stretching a canal across Panama. "Don't fritter away your time" and "Get action," the president barks, heeding his own advice.

Need of a Bio



2 3 TRAILBLAZERS

NDREW CARNEGIE

ANDREW CARNEGIE by David Nasaw (2006)



Of all the robber barons, Andrew Carnegie feels the most modern. The most likable, toothough that may sell him short (which, at five feet, he was as well). He was born a pauper and became, in the words of financier J. P. Morgan, "the

richest man in the world." Sure, Carnegie was no saint—in the laissez-faire Gilded Age, righteousness was rarely rewarded. He sold crap-ass securities and used an early railroad gig to ink insider deals that set him up in the steel business. He made his first million by 35 but vowed to die penniless and began funding libraries, museums, concert halls, and collegessetting an example that modern plutocrats like Bill Gates and Warren Buffett aspire to today.

suspenseful as a double-agent spy novel. John Forbes Nash Jr.

2 4 TRAILBLAZERS

evolving, and how he came to have no allies,

described in his landmark "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech than the cuddly future Dr. King put forth in "I Have a Dream." Yet what's so striking about Marable's book

is how the supposedly rigid beliefs of Dr. King's fiery militant foil were constantly

> A BEAUTIFUL MIND by Sylvia Nasar (1998)



MECAUSE It is terrifying to imagine the turns a life can take. One minute vou're a rising stud of American

mathematics, the brash young heir to Einstein, perhaps. The next, you're announcing that you've been appointed Emperor of Antarctica, that powers from outer space are speaking to you in coded messages. In the late 1950s, John Nash fell in a flash from genius to madness. Decades were lost. But the voices quieted; Nash re-emerged, began working again. Then they gave him the goddamn Nobel Prize. Sure, things can get pretty bleak. But they can turn around, too.

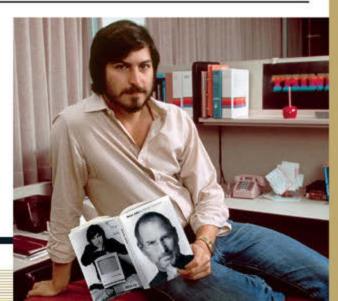
Five Men in

→ The world will be a richer place once these guys have definitive tell-alls.

TRAILBLAZERS STEVE **JOBS**

STEVE JOBS by Walter Isaacson (2011)

It's so very many things at once—a panoramic tribute to a singular American mind; the definitive portrait of the definitive American company; a playbook for engineers, designers, marketers, and managers in tech and in the wider world of anybody making products and selling them for money; an "Idiot's Guide to '70s Start-ups and '00s Revivals"; a manual for megalomania (and veganism); and a best-seller of such magnitude that it's dumb to opt out. We know it's the only book your less readerly bros have read since collegebut don't let that suggest anything other than the fact that Jobs offers up entry points for countless kinds of men.





New 2 in 1 BODY & HAIR WASH

FOR A FRESH, INVIGORATING CLEAN



RUB HERE TO TRY THE EXQUISITE NIGHT FRAGRANCE



> My Life as a Rent A Gent

ON A FRIDAY night this past November. I wander into the lobby of the W Hotel in Hollywood to pick up a woman named Cathy, my date for a wedding that's

Are you a

man, a good conversationalist. a skilled meeterof-parents? Do

food and smiling? Do you have free

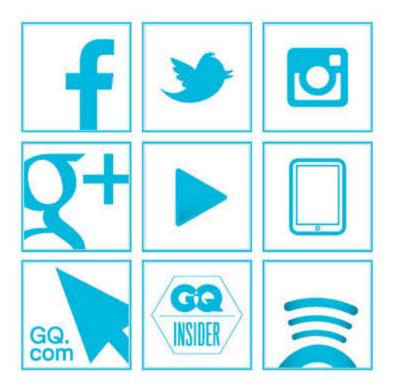
need for money? Can you keep it in your pants? Well, good news, son: There's a whole lot of women out

to pay you for your

goes undercover

in the very new, very strange datefor-hire economy

PROMOTION



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Men on Rent A Gent's roster don't get to choose the women they go out with, but they're
expected to deliver any customer, big or small, a good time.

starting in less than an hour. The thing is, I don't know what Cathy looks like or, for that matter, whose nuptials we'll be witness to.* This isn't a blind date; it's work. I've been hired by Cathy through a service called Rent A Gent, which provides men for nonsexual dates, to be her companion for the evening. The mystery tingles: Will she turn out to be some lost, sultry beauty? The anxiety tingles, too: Is Cathy going to think I'm worth \$200 an hour? The only detail I've been given is that I'm meant to pretend we've been dating for eight months.

From behind me, a woman's voice: "Davy?"

I turn. Facing me stands a blonde in her early forties, neither attractive nor unattractive, wrapped in a sexy, sheer blue-and-black outfit. The effect is of a middle-aged math teacher squeezed into her old high-school-prom dress. "Cathy?" She nods, and we move close and share an awkward hug.

As we drive to the wedding, I ask Cathy if we might concoct a story for how we met. But she's shy and nervous—this is her first time hiring a Rent A Gent, and it's hard to get her to focus on building our cover. To put her at ease, I tell her that I'm nervous, too, a tactic suggested to me during my training, which also happens to be true, since this is my first date as a Gent.

At the country club where the wedding is being held, we leave my car with the valet, hurry upstairs, and find seats together in the back of the gallery. The preacher welcomes everyone—he's one of those aggressively friendly Christian cats who quickly whips out a knock-knock joke about Jesus. But then he gets serious. "Getting married is easy," he says. "Staying married, not so much." He asks the married-couple-to-be to practice a few key phrases, starting with "Ilove you." Then the preacher gazes across

*Cathy's name and some identifying details have been changed.

the room. "I want everybody to turn to that special someone they came with and practice this, too," he says. "For real!"

The room becomes a clamor of voices. Cathy and I laugh, and I take her hands in mine. In the car, she'd told me that she'd given up on OkCupid but was sick of going to weddings and other events alone. I may only be her hired boyfriend, but I see no reason to hold back. "I love you," I tell her, looking deep into her eyes.

She smiles, her eyes catching a bit of light from the chandeliers overhead. "I love you, too," she says. Though we've known each other for only forty-five minutes, the moment feels unexpectedly intimate.

Next, the preacher asks us to face each other and say, "I forgive you." Cathy and I, hands still together, laugh a little and forgive each other. Finally we're given our last line. With great import, I lean toward her. "Cathy," I say, "I will never leave you."

Her eyes melt a little. "Davy," she repeats, "I will never leave you." There are four hours left on our date.

THE FOUNDER OF Rent A Gent is a bright, alluring 33-year-old New Yorker named Sara Shikhman, who was trawling the Internet a few years ago, looking for a date to a wedding herself. There were plenty of services for men who wanted to hire women—for sex, mas-

sage, or simple companionship—but none available for women to hire men. A light-bulb went on. When Shikhman, a former corporate lawyer, mentioned the idea of starting a gentlemen-for-hire business to her friends, they either "thought I was out of my fucking mind," she says, or became obsessed with the notion. "I had customers lined up before I'd even hired any Gents."

Shikhman placed ads everywhere from LinkedIn to Craigslist seeking hot, charming, accomplished men. No kissing or sex,

she told them; only conversation. With a couple of pals, she interviewed prospective Gents in the back of a local café, gauging their skills as conversationalists, carefully charting their charisma, intelligence, and ability to listen, and asking them to demonstrate their talents—dancing, telling jokes. "Good looks are easy," she says. "There's no work involved. Just because you're a goodlooking guy doesn't mean you know how to entertain a woman." What Shikhman hoped to find, ultimately, was someone so dashing, distinctive, and engaging that she might be tempted to hire him herself. At each casting call, only one in a hundred made the cut and were invited, after clearing a comprehensive background check, to join her online Rent A Gent roster.

The site launched in December 2013, and the demand was instant. Although Shikhman's customers are as young as 22 and as old as 87, the bulk of her clients are business professionals in their thirties and forties undiscouraged by the \$200-anhour price tag. (The money is split fifty-fifty between her company and the Gents themselves.) Weddings, corporate dinners, a trip to the museum-they're just not as fun on your own, and women seem thrilled for a hookup to the kind of scrumptious arm candy Shikhman provides. Surprisingly, a good number of her clients offer payment with their *husbands*' Amex platinum cards. "The husband's got a work dinner that they're not invited to," she explains. "They figure they'll treat themselves to a handsome, attentive dinner partner."

Of course, some customers have more complex motives. According to Shikhman, a woman in Florida recently hired a much younger Gent to stand at the kitchen sink in his boxers, washing dishes, as though he

"Good looks are easy," Shikhman says. "There's no work involved.

Just because you're a good-looking guy doesn't mean you know how to entertain a woman."

were her new live-in boyfriend. When her ex-husband came to pick up their kids, an argument erupted, and the Gent raced out the back door and hid in the woman's boat.

Rent A Gent now has 300 men available, concentrated mainly in New York, with a budding presence in Chicago, Miami, Houston, Vegas, D.C., San Francisco, and L.A., where I live. Shikhman offers me a meeting with her recruiting manager, Maricar Tinio, and though I'm bald, funny-looking, and closing in on 40,



MARK NASON FOOTWEAR



somehow I pass the test. More than anything, it seems, Rent A Gent is simply looking for friendly, curious guys—someone more interested in asking questions than talking about himself. And the truth is, most clients in their forties don't want a date with a young stud just out of college, no matter how rippled his abs might be—they want someone who saw *Backdraft* in the theater, not on an iPhone.

"Women can get sex anytime for free," says Shikhman. "What we really want is someone to talk to, to share an experience with and show us a good time. At a wedding, everyone's coupled up; it's great to have someone who's on your team."

Before my first date, Shikhman assigns me a handler, a suave 37-year-old from Venice, Italy, named Jon Zarantonello, who's also one of her star Gents. Jon guides me through a series of training scenarios, explaining, for instance, what to do if I'm introduced to a client's parents at a wedding: "You're going to be looked at as someone she may spend her life with. You want to be a nice guy, so they don't think their daughter's dating a jerk. But don't be too friendly; let them think she can do better. If you're this amazing guy, they'll wonder why their daughter couldn't keep you, since they'll never see you again."

If you're going to pretend to be her boyfriend, Jon says, a bit of light touching is necessary-an arm around her waist, a hand on the shoulder. But no kissing, Jon stresses, and certainly no sex. Rent A Gent is not an escort service, and any touching beyond what the role requires is strictly against policy. Obviously, Rent A Gent can't control what happens off the clock, but the company has a dedicated "chaperone" who calls both parties after each date to make sure the date has ended. A Gent suspected for any reason of hooking up with customers will quickly be terminated, Jon says, though so far no one's been axed. "If the woman leans in for a kiss," he says, "back away. Tell her, 'I would love to, you're so adorable, but this could get me fired."

Think of each date, Jon says, as a conspiracy that only the two of you are in on. "She's the director," he tells me. "You're the actor."

AFTER THE WEDDING CEREMONY,

Cathy and I grab a couple of bourbons and sneak away to a quiet corner where we can talk in earnest for a bit without scrambling to maintain our cover. The vibe is more natural, like we're on a first date.

Cathy shares her story: She owns a chain of pet-grooming shops around Santa Barbara. She married young, had two kids, but she and her husband divorced after thirteen years. Now that she's a single mom

with two teenagers, her dating life has been limited. After a fruitless period of online dating, she's thrown in the towel on the possibility of romance. Her life is full-she runs a growing business, cooks for her kids, helps them with their homework, and even finds time to volunteer with a program that takes inner-city kids deep-sea fishing-but she's also incredibly lonely and longs for a partner to share life's daily ups and downs. She never pictured herself hiring a date, she says, but now she's glad she did. The more Cathy opens herself up to me and the more Knob Creek I knock back, the more I find myself drawn to her goodness and kindness, even aware of a blooming attraction. In the act of feigning great interest in everything she has to say, I've developed some genuine affection.

I take her hand and pull her back inside, and we come face-to-face with the father of the bride, a burly, boisterous fellow. "I want you to meet Davy," she says, and I shake the guy's hand and offer my congratulations.

"I've heard about you!" he roars, clapping me on the back. "You're the one from out of state, yeah?"

I play right along. "That's me! Hey, quite a ceremony."

"'I forgive you,' right?" He booms a laugh.

"And 'I will never leave you." I squeeze Cathy's hand flirtatiously. "Intense!"

Luckily, Cathy knows the family only through work, and I don't have to pull the wool over the eyes of any of her close friends and family. At dinner, we're seated with friends of the bride's parents—four married couples—and we mix it up with them while turning to each other here and there to make little jokes and sample each other's meal. I'm no Adonis, but when I think of how lonely it might be for Cathy if she'd come to the wedding on her own, the only spoon in a drawer of forks and knives, I start to understand just how valuable the service I'm providing might really be to her.

The drinks keep flowing. Before long I feel, under the table, Cathy's hand on my thigh, and I discover that my own hand has started the journey along her black stockings from her knee to her thigh and beyond, high up under her skirt.

"How'd you guys meet?" an older woman at our table wants to know as cake is served. Since we haven't invented a story, I share the story of how my own parents met and claim the tale as our own. Another woman asks a follow-up: Do we plan to have kids?

"Cathy's got two teenagers already," I explain. "Great kids. But the truth is, we're thinking we'd try to have another one of our own." Cathy flashes an enormous smile and leans her head on my shoulder. I'm just trying to play this boyfriend part with

Rent Your Own Gentlemanhood

Want to make a quick buck? Here's what you need to know.



Rent A Gent

Founded: December 2013 Roster: 300 handsome men Job requirements: Going to weddings, corporate dinners, and art museums Off-limits: Kissing, sex, paying the tab Pay: \$100 per hour

ManServants

Founded: September 2014
Roster: Twelve very handsome men
Job requirements: Bartending,
chauffeuring, feeding women grapes
Off-limits: Kissing, sex, revealing your
real name
Pay: \$50 to \$80 per hour

Actual Dating

Founded: Late Stone Age
Roster: 3.5 billion men, including her
exes and Channing Tatum
Job requirements: Sporadic texts,
Thai food, club-hopping, drunk sex
Off-limits: Eyeing other women,
moving in together within the first year
Pay: Nothing; you may lose money.

gusto, but the lines of reality and fiction seem to be blurring, especially for her.

This is common, my handler, Jon, has warned me: "It doesn't matter if a woman has paid for a date. Once the guy shows up, it's easy to forget it's not real."

I'm generally a reluctant dancer with not much talent for it, but I keep hearing Jon's words in my mind: *Show her such a good time that when she wakes up the next morning, she's still completely aglow.* "Come on," I say to Cathy, "let's hit the dance floor!"

We dance our fucking asses off. We bump and grind. We even slow-dance, pressed closely together, alongside the bride and groom. We drink more and make all kinds of new friends. Cathy cracks jokes that don't even make sense, but I laugh anyway, consumed with my mission of showing her the time of her life. I don't feel like a fraud; I feel like a damn good Gent.

Later we don silly costumes and light up the photo booth, and as each strip spits from the machine, glistening with photo-finishing chemicals, we stand side by side, holding hands, and examine the evidence of our loving, romantic, and precious make-believe life together. "Time to take you home," I tell her as the party winds down. "At midnight I turn into a pumpkin."

find myself wishing for her to find the joy and connection she so clearly deserves. Before we pull away, I kiss her head gently and stand there squeezing her hands, now, oddly, not quite ready to let her go.

"I've got your cell number," she says. "I'll see you soon!"

She gives me a smile, and I push a smile out in return, though I'm sure I'll never see her again.

THE NEXT MORNING, a stream of texts from Cathy: I woke up with a nice smile on my face.... I never expected all of this in my wildest dreams.... Really looking forward to seeing you again soon XO.

Shit. Time to consult Jon, my handler. I tell him everything that went down,

Arm touching and intense staring are just fine; kissing and sexual contact are strictly off-limits.

On the drive back to the W Hotel, she turns to me. "Is this real?" she asks me. "I mean, tonight? Everything?"

My training didn't cover this.

"You know," she continues, "I'd really love to have you over next week for a homecooked meal. I'm quite the cook."

If she's meant to wake up the next morning still aglow, how can I turn her down and shatter the illusion I've worked all night to create? "I'd love that," I tell her, even as the lie makes me queasy. "I'll be there."

She smiles. "Who knew I'd have to rent a Gent to find such a perfect match?"

At her hotel, I climb out and step close for a quick hug, eager to get out of there. The rush of playing Perfect Gentleman has faded. Now I'm just exhausted and sad, ready to get back to my own life. But as I lean in, I feel a swirl of tenderness and

how, the night before, I made promises I couldn't keep but didn't know what else to do. Now I just feel heartless and cruel and don't know how to extract myself without harming someone I've come to care about.

First of all, Jon says, this happens with surprising frequency, and I shouldn't beat myself up over it-with experience, I'll learn how to dial back the romance knob just the tiniest bit. I suggest that maybe I should tell Cathy I have a girlfriend. That's not the way out, Jon says. "You don't want her to feel like you're choosing some other woman over her." Instead, he offers another exit. "At the wedding," he explains, "it's you and her versus everybody else." As soon as the wedding's over, flip things around. "Now it's you and her versus Rent A Gent. Blame everything on the agency! You wish you could continue to see her, but you'll lose your job, or worse. You've signed a contract. If you're seen with her-even if you're sending texts-you could be sued. Tell her it's agonizing not to see her again. but you can't take the risk."

I'm dubious about Jon's solution and spend a day and a half trying to craft the perfect text. When I finally send it, like magic, Cathy responds exactly as Jon had predicted: Hi Davy, I want you to know I totally understand, I would never want to put you at risk of losing your job, and I respect that. I will look forward to the day when you change jobs! Until then, I will cherish the memories of that night. XO.

Did she believe me? Is she just saving face? Cathy couldn't have been more gracious and kind, but still I have questions about a service that baits a hook and yanks ravenous fish from the water, only to leave them flopping onshore.

When I talk to Sara Shikhman, she admits that this kind of romantic collateral damage is a challenge she hadn't anticipated and hasn't really figured out yet how to solve-"an interesting conceptual problem" is how she puts it. On the one hand, the fact that women keep falling for their Gents is a measure of just how effective her service has been; on the other hand, the last thing the world needs is more heartbreak.

Three weeks later, I've got a reading scheduled at an art space near downtown L.A. Afterward, I'm downing beers with friends when a familiar face appears out of nowhere. Out of context, it takes me a second to recognize her. "It's Cathy!" she says, stepping close with a smile and giving me a hug. She'd seen a posting online for my event and drove down after work from Santa Barbara. Surprise! Cathy seems livelier, less wilted than before, and tells me that our night together was pivotal. "I remembered what it's like to feel that romantic flutter, how exciting it can be," she says. She's been re-invigorated, shaken from her lovelorn torpor, and despite its risks and frustrations is eager to hop back on the online-dating carnival ride and feeling optimistic. Already she's lined up two dates for the following week.

"Those lucky bastards!" I say, with full sincerity.

I introduce her to my friends, remaining discreet. "This is my friend Cathy," I tell them.

"Davy was my Rent A Gent," she explains matter-of-factly, as though everyone has been there, done that. We all raise our beers.

davy rothbart is the author of My Heart Is an Idiot and the creator of Found Magazine. He can be rented for \$200 an hour.



WELL, MAYBE NOT DIE EXACTLY. BUT WHEN THE FINAL SEASON OF 'MAD MEN' DRAWS TO A CLOSE, THAT COCKY, DEPRESSIVE ADMAN THAT JON HAMM MADE—AND THAT MADE JON HAMM—IS GOING TO DISAPPEAR. WHICH MEANS TWO THINGS: IT'S TIME TO SIT DOWN AND SAVOR THAT CHARACTER'S CLOSING NOTES, AND THEN IT'S TIME TO GET EXCITED FOR EVERYTHING JON HAMM IS GOING TO DO NEXT











style commandments

cast your polo shirts in a brand-new role

Don Draper is a very serious man. But Jon Hamm? He's a little more chill. That's why we chose a polo with a suit for every look Hamm wears here; the polo will mellow out any two-piece in your closet, especially the tough-to-pull-off ones, like this plaid.

polo shirt \$41 Louis Vuttto suit \$1,82 Paul Smith Londo loafers \$56 Church'





THE LAST TIME I SPENT A DAY IN LOS ANGELES WITH JON HAMM was a long Hollywood journey ago. *Mad Men* was close to concluding its second season and had crested, in a little more than a year, into a full-blown cultural phenomenon. We drove in a big, looping circle around L.A., visiting spots from Hamm's life B.D., Before Don: the beat-down Silver Lake house where he had consistently charmed the landlady into waiting a few extra days for the rent, the Eastside "below-the-line" bars where he would drink with grips and best boys and his old Missouri pal Paul Rudd as they waited for something to break. Those lean days were near enough removed then that you could still almost feel the chill of cautious anxiety coming off Hamm's skin. Our talk was peppered with *if*s and *God willings*. He had only recently splurged on his first serious car, asking his amused financial adviser for permission first. (I got the car wrong in the piece, which annoyed Hamm. It was a 2009 Audi S5.)

Six and a half years later, we cruise down La Brea in a pantherine Mercedes-Benz CLS63 AMG—one of the perks of being the voice-over man for the car company's TV commercials. At Hamm's suggestion, we've ditched lunch at a nice Beverly Hills restaurant to check out a sandwich shop called Top Round. He's been told that they serve a St. Louis-style thin-shaved roast-beef sandwich. I get the feeling, by this point, that he also just likes to drive. Ever a bro of his generation, Hamm, now 44, cannot help but quote Ferris Bueller as he eases into gear: "It is so choice. If you have the means, I highly recommend picking one up." I make

sure to snap a photo of the car's back end, to get it right this time, though in truth he's already driven this one for over a year, so it's time for a new model, anyway. It has 7,300 miles on it.

Back in 2008, Hamm in his civilian drag of jeans and a baseball hat passed almost unnoticed. These days, things are different. Not only, obviously, do more people know Don Draper; we've also all grown accustomed to Jon Hamm himself. Throughout his rise to fame, he's remained notably present—not in your face, screaming for attention, but...around, game for whatever oddball opportunity has come along.

Thus, the *Saturday Night Live* appearances, the scene-stealing roles on *30 Rock* and in *Bridesmaids*, a raft of the kind of cameos that get listed in the IMDb alongside the words *voice* and *uncredited* in parentheses. When we met, he was in the midst of shooting a role in Netflix's reboot of *Wet Hot American Summer*. It is the résumé of an actor who picks up the phone and says, "Yes, what the hell," and then drives on over. It's all seemed very comfortable and fun, which is to say possessed of nearly as opposite a brand of charisma as it's possible to get from Don Draper's. Jon Hamm, in the good way, is not really very *cool*.

Instead, he's an enthusiast, what his longtime girlfriend, the actress and filmmaker Jennifer Westfeldt, calls "a goofball and a science nerd and a voracious reader and a fanatical Cardinals fan and a comedy geek." That last, in particular, rings true. Long before stardom, he was a familiar presence on the periphery of L.A.'s underground comedy scene—a regular at venues like M Bar and Largo. He played in a poker game with guys like Michael Ian Black, David Wain, and *Comedy Bang! Bang!* host Scott Aukerman. "He was just this goofy dude with a funny sense of humor who kept being on these failed TV shows," says Aukerman. "The surprise to me was how good of a dramatic actor he was. The guy I recognize personally is the Jon Hamm of *Bridesmaids* and *SNL*. The guy I don't recognize is Don Draper."

Aukerman's podcast is one of many on which Hamm has appeared over the years, more than holding his own among the more practiced funnymen and -women. In high school, he was the linebacker who also starred in the drama club's production of *Godspell;* listening to his podcast appearances, you get a clear sense of his ease in both worlds. And listening to his hosts, you can hear echoes of the giddy thrill nerds feel when the cool kid suddenly sits at their lunch table.

"I was just kind of that weird kid that always hung around" is how Hamm prefers to see it. "And you know, comedians are generally pretty nice people." From a comic's point of view, he's an ideal member of the scene: an appreciative audience member, fun to hang with, but with no personal designs on getting onstage himself. He is perhaps falsely modest on this point, but emphatic: "I have no affinity for it other than my appreciation of it. I had no desire to get up onstage and tell jokes. I prefer to stand *next* to really funny people. I was always good at being observationally funny—like contributing something funny to the conversation."

"He's really good at doing bits," says Seth Meyers, describing the ability, much prized by comedians, to seamlessly riff offstage (or, as Meyers explains it, not having to constantly ask, "Wait, are you being serious right now?"). Meyers was *SNL*'s head writer when Hamm first appeared on the show and didn't know what to expect from his guest host. "As soon as you start talking to Jon, you realize he speaks in the terminology of comedy," he says. And he's got good instincts: For "Jon Hamm's John Ham," which Meyers calls "one of

"i had no desire to get up onstage and tell jokes," hamm says. "i prefer to stand next to really funny people."

the dumbest sketches I ever wrote" (it was an ad for deli meat to be eaten on the toilet), the actor grasped immediately that it would only work delivered absolutely straight. "He has an ability to give it a Leslie Nielsen–type quality. He can play something with no awareness when that's what's required," Meyers says.

Comedy has also proved an elegant solution to the problem faced by any actor who spends a long time playing an iconic role. It's not fair, but it's true: Jon and Don look an awful lot alike. When you watch Hamm deliver a sports agent's pitch in the baseball movie *Million Dollar Arm* or suffer beneath a sheen of sweat as a morphine-addicted doctor on the British TV series *A Young Doctor's Notebook*, it's hard to shake Don Draper. But he is never less like the adman than when he is playing the comic.

Hamm shrugs. "Mostly it's been like 'Who doesn't like to laugh?'" he says. "Being goofy, being funny, fucking around—that's part of what makes life worth going through."

So maybe the future is clear: funny, varied, surprising. And right now, the only thing standing between Hamm and the future is The Past.





THE END OF THE '60s HAS ALWAYS BEEN AS potent a myth as the '60s themselves. It's why Altamont is as vivid in the imagination as Woodstock, Manson as Martin Luther King Jr.; it's why the Grateful Dead songbook is suffused with death. Mad Men has never trucked in such specifics; one of the show's most consistently illuminating insights has been the way the big events of history play out on the edges of people's real lives. But Matthew Weiner's creation has presented the same Möbius strip of mystique and demystification. glamour and disintegration. It has been at once an infatuated elegy for an era and a great Oedipal fuck-you to it. And the end has been there literally from the beginning, ever since Don began his long, tumbling fall.

Pretty soon, that fall is going to end. Perhaps that hasn't sunk in. Perhaps *Mad Men* already feels like a relic from a bygone era; after all, it is on cable, which for you youngsters was a short-lived content-delivery system that preceded Internet streaming. Like The Sopranos—its progenitor in so many ways—the show has lived long enough to have wandered in a few questionable narrative circles, to be overtaken in the public chatter by younger, fresher series, ultimately to be taken a little for granted. But somewhere around the middle of January, in between the new season premiere of Girls and the Super Bowl, you could feel the first anxious flutterings as the Internet began to look ahead for the next big consensus Moment and began its passionate re-embrace of Mad Men. Months before the premiere of this last set of episodes, Vulture was first out of the gate with a post, "Can You Like Mad Men If You Think Don Draper Is a Bad Dude?" Finales like Mad Men's have become those rarest of events, at least outside of sports and award shows, that demand everyone watch at the same time. (Whatever else streaming has brought to the Golden Age of TV, those group experiences are something it sacrifices at the altar of on-demand.) Pretty soon it's going to hit home that we have only a few more hours to spend in the company of Peggy and Pete, Roger and Joan. And Don, of course, as much a man out of time as ever: TV's Last Difficult Man.

Walter White is gone, dead amidst his beloved lab equipment. Tony Soprano is...let's just say gone. So is *Deadwood*'s Al Swearengen and *The Wire*'s Jimmy McNulty and *The Shield*'s Vic Mackey—all those raging, broken, lovable, despicable men who



formed the sharp edge of the plow pushing television out of its boob-tube past and into the Golden Age. That battle has been won, more quickly and definitively than even the men and women who orchestrated it could have imagined. The idea that art can flourish on TV is now a given. We no longer need the Trojan horse of genre—Mob show, cop show, period piece, Western—to sneak quality onto the small screen, and we no longer need the glib formulation of the antihero to keep it there. A TV series can exist just to tell stories now—all kinds of stories, from all kinds of perspectives. Some, sure, are likely to include male characters who are both charismatic and deeply flawed, who are endlessly contradictory and essentially unknowable—even, or especially, to themselves. But in that way, "antiheroic" was always just a way of saying "real."

Mad Men has long trafficked in emotional violence at least as disturbing as the mayhem of its more overtly bloody counterparts. And though the stakes were, on paper, much lower, it somehow always seemed more of a given that Don Draper would end up dead than either Tony or Walt. ("I certainly can't confirm or deny anything," says Hamm, of course.)

John Slattery, who plays Roger Sterling on the show, received his script for the final episode before shooting began, and read excitedly to the end. What he found there was strangely underwhelming. "I thought, 'Wait, *what?*' It wasn't as…eventful as you would expect." That was the feeling at the episode's table read, attended by the entire cast and plenty of curious crew. Then, after a pause, Matthew Weiner called out a list of core cast members, (*text continued on page* 171)





what you can learn from the learn fr



Οľ

Before You Peacock, Cover Your Basics

→ Don Draper's mastery of business-suit fundamentals is what put the show on the style map. Even if a gray two-piece isn't your signature look, it should be a weapon in your arsenal. It will always get you the bank loan, the job, the compliments—and maybe even the girl.

02

Have a Signature Look—Then Tweak It

→ By the time Don flew out to California in season two, we'd come to expect him in that gray suit. So when he slipped a polo under the jacket, it felt like a revelation. And as we just showed you in the previous pages, this polo move is back-er than ever right now.

03

Hats Aren't Retro— They're Timeless

In the '60s, a gentleman had to wear a hat. These days it's optional—but no less gentlemanly. Go to a proper hat shop, where the staff will teach you about sizing and styling. To channel Don, snap down your brim; it'll turn your eyes into piercing bullets.

04

The Best Place to Try Something Splashy Is 5,000 Miles from Home (Part 1)

→ Don dresses pretty conservatively in Manhattan, but on Hawaiian holiday his style got louder. Vacation is the best time to unleash your sartorial daredevil. See what risks you can pull off, then repeat them back home.

05

The Best Place to Try Something Splashy Is 5,000 Miles from Home (Part 2)

→ Vacation, when you're far away from ball-busting friends and co-workers, is also the time to dial up the sex appeal a little. When you hit the beach with your girl, try the white jeans, the tank top, the shorter and louder swim trunks.



'MAD MEN' CAN BE
CREDITED WITH BRINGING
LOTS OF STUFF BACK IN STYLE:
SCOTCH FOR LUNCH COMES
TO MIND. BUT A CLOSER LOOK
AT DON DRAPER'S FINEST
STYLE MOVES REVEALS THAT
THERE'S MORE TO STEAL
THAN SLIM GRAY SUITS,
WHITE POCKET SQUARES, AND
OTHER PEOPLE'S WIVES









06

Stripes with a Dark Side

→ After a bender landed Don in jail and his colleagues put him on a mandatory "break" from work, even his clothes were somber. In that dark palette, stripes stop being so preppy, so put yours to the test: Moody striped ties can go straight from work to a night out, and on weekends they sync up with a black jean jacket.

07

Look Sharp Even When You're Coming Undone

→ If there's one thing Don does well, it's self-destructing with panache. (Yes, there's a whiskey in his outstretched hand.) We're not endorsing drinking yourself into oblivion, just having snappy white dress shirts that will look this louche and cool when the tie comes off.

00

Got the Gray Suit Down Pat? Break Out the Patterns

→ Don's style evolved, and yours should, too. Once you can manage a solid suit with a killer shirt, tie, and pocket square, take the next step. We're not sure if fashion these days is following Mad Men or vice versa, but plaid jackets and suits are back the bolder the better.

09

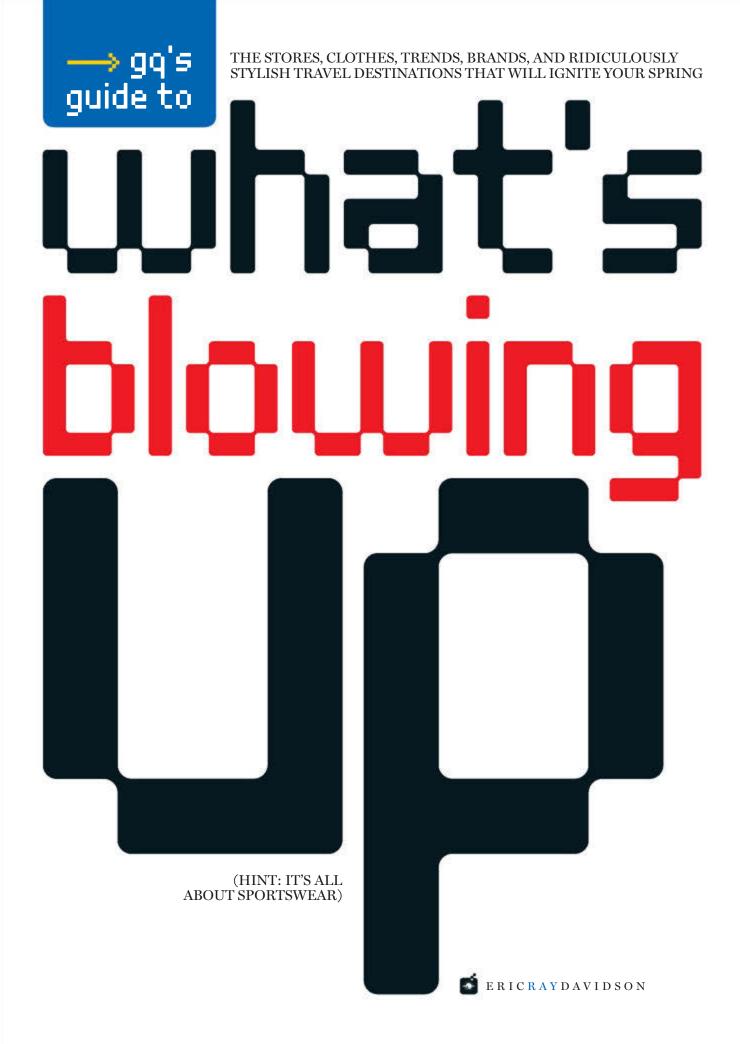
Don's Most Influential Style Move

→ If Jon Hamm had a dollar for every jar of pomade sold since the show first aired, he could buy half of Hollywood. Even in a time when beards are back in style (see page 140), Draper makes a strong case for a sharp razor and a standing appointment with your barber.

10

A Suit You Wear to Bed

→ What can we say:
The man made pretty
much everything oldschool cool again. Even
Draper's retro-jammies
look has been revived,
thanks to the New York
label Sleepy Jones.
(Also: Brooks Brothers
never stopped selling
pj's.) The point is—with
all due respect to your
sweaty boxers—good
style never sleeps.





We're calling this fashion moment the SportsCore era.

WELCOME TO 2015:

The streets are your office. Your iPhone is your desktop. And a new fashion movement has risen to outfit us all. Corporate types call it "athleisure," but we just think it's a smart way to dress for a life spent sending e-mails from Ubers and airports. You know you're doing it right when the stuff you wear to the gym, the office, and brunch is all mixed together.







Your new spring jacket was designed for the forty-yard dash. It also works for your four o'clock flight.

• There's no better incarnation of SportsCore than a stylish layer like the track jacket. You can even wear one to the Grammys. (Just ask Pharrell.)

from left: \$130 **Fred Perry** | \$149 **Gents** stylist for large still lifes throughout: donna castro at mark edward inc.



"IT'S GOTTA BE THE SHOES!"

How sports style became our national obsession (and, oh yeah, a bajillion-dollar business).



Sean Connery accessorizes his jeans with a golf bag. Stan Smith, back when he was more famous than his sneakers. 1974 More stylish than Knievel: motocross king Roger DeCoster.

sportscorestylemove



 The COOLEST **CUTOFF TEES** out there all have a big-ass graphic chest stripe.



If you're a green-juicin', SoulCyclin' man of 2015, show off the results.

· Cutoff tees used to be for unrepentant jocks only, but now they're street-legal for anyone with a basic gym membership and a little confidence.

from left: tank top jeans Simon Miller leather jacket top \$50 Zanerobe

\$59 Zanerobe necklace **Melet** Mercantile Dsquared2 | tank

labelthat'sblowing<mark>u</mark>p

THE LABEL THAT'S **FAMOUS FOR** SELLING **YOU BOXER BRIEFS IS NOW** INTO BIONIC **FUTURE-FABRIC** SUPER-SUITS.



IN CASE YOU DIDN'T SEE those wild Justin Bieber ads, Calvin Klein is still making headlines and beaucoup bucks from its underwear. But make sure you don't miss the brand's highest-end line, Calvin Klein Collection. The designer, Italo Zucchelli, is an über-geek for hightech fabrics, and his threads will make you look like a badass escapee from a secret Area 51 test lab where the athlete of the future is being incubated.

sportscoresportswear

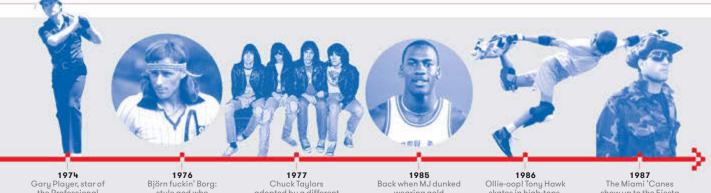
JUST BECAUSE **YOU'RE** PLAYING GOLF DOESN'T MEAN **YOU NEED TO** LOOK LIKE IT.

JUST AS SPORTS are influencing what we're wearing on the street, the streets are changing what we wear for actual sports. For instance: Don't wear golf clothes for golf. Wear chinos and polos designed by fashion designers, not by the Ping and Callaway people.



 The coolest GOLF SPIKES now look just like sneakers.

 Wear uour usual Bubba Watson's.



Gary Player, star of the Professional Goth Association.

Björn fuckin' Borg: style god who dabbles in tennis.

Chuck Taylors adopted by a different team: the Ramones.

Back when MJ dunked wearing gold chains (and hair).

Ollie-oop! Tony Hawk skates in high-tops.

The Miami 'Canes show up to the Fiesta Bowl ready for war.

When a hoodie and a rain slicker love each other very much, they come together and make a windbreaker. The right one will colorize your look or sit happily scrunched up in your backpack.







\$70 American Eagle Outfitters



\$145 Ecoalf



\$950 Bottega Veneta











Miami SPORTSCORE CAPITAL

In a city where everyone is perfectly tan, six-packed, and—how do we put it?—vain as all hell, fitness style is the only style

MANY TRIP TO Miami should start at the pool at The Standard (04), so you can get your tan up to par with the bronzed locals. Then make a last-ditch attempt to crunch your abs into shape alongside lots of hot girls in yoga shorts at DBC Fitness (01) in the Design District. While you're in the

area, burn a few more calories walking around the world-class-graffiti mecca known as Wynwood Walls. From there, swing by Del Toro Shoes (05) for Italian-made desert boots with a sneaker sole, and grab some coffee at Panther Coffee (03). The hipster-watching is worth triple the

price of a cup of joe. To South Beach-ify your look, go to Cottage Miami (02), with its killer surfwear and easy pieces like Michael Bastian sweats. Now loop back to The Standard to find your future wife (or wife for the weekend). Play it cool, though. Poolside nakedness is fully endorsed.





1989 Spike Lee takes cultish-sneaker culture mainstream.

1990 Axl Rose sings "The Star Spandex Banner."

1990 Not pictured: fifth N.W.A member Al Davis. Andre Agassi serves up acid-washed denim to tennis fans.

2001 Richie Tenenbaum brings back the Björn Borg headband.

2002

Emo dudes dry their tears with sweatbands.



stylebiblezois

FOLLOW THE FIT GIRLS OF INSTAGRAM.

The chances you date one of these ladies? Not good. But that's why God invented Instagram.





@YESJULZ • Her weekly fitness regimen: hosting six parties, making four trips to Barry's Bootcamp, twerking a half hour a day.



@ROSE_BERTRAM You don't become runway model and Sports Illustrated swimsuit rookie with gym-phobia.



@DAMARISLEWIS • If she's good enough for Prince (the Purple One calls he his muse), she's probably worth a follow.



@ALEXISRENEG Face of the cutie-pie next door. Body of the goddess up above.



endorses





Steve Jobs has become an afterlife fashionista.

· Nike made them backpacks. Apple made them shopping bags. Alex Wang made them decadent as hell.

\$195 Diesel (left) | \$595 Alexander Wang

NYLON IS **NOT A DIRTY** WORD ANYMORE.



This radical quilted mesh bomber is 99 percent nylon, 1 percent spandex. \$1,395 + shell Calvin Klein Collection



Sauishu **neoprene** is as \$2,100 Neil Barrett at MrPorter



These days, there's even such a thing as fancu-ass poluester. \$425 Theory

sportscoresportswear

YOU DRESS LIKE A MOUNTAIN MAN— NOW GO BE ONE.

🤰 тнеке's а вониз to wearing '70s-style hiking gear: It's handy when you actually hit the trail.



• The coolest first layer

• If you're gonna walk up a canyon, might as well tan your thighs CARGO SHORTS.



2004 Fuck cancer. (Also, fuck Lance Armstrong.)



2004

Kanye West scares hip-hop with preppy rugby shirts.



Liam Gallagher sports a track jacket despite never running



The 49ers' Mike Nolan coaches in a suit...made by Reebok.



2011 Drake makes so many hits he has to wear batting gloves.

ize gq april-20is



IT'S TIME

IT'S TIME TO PICK A SIDE IN THE GREAT LULULEMAN WAR.

Against It

I'm sure Lululemon's clothes for men are fine. It's the name that's emasculating. Also, the logo looks like a rich housewife's haircut. The main brand associations: mani-pedis, blowouts, salad with dressing on the side. I wouldn't wear this stuff any more than I'd wear biking shorts from Ann Taylor Loft. -NICK MARINO

With It

What year is it,
1946? I don't care
if a brand is popular
with Starbucks
Beckies—if they
make the best men's
gym shorts, then
that's what I'm
buying. And if Ann
Taylor Loft is the
industry leader in
bike shorts, I'll take
a pair of those, too.
—SAM SCHUBE

There's a new "exercycle" you'll wish you could ride into town.

• "Outdoor bikes are carbon-fiber, space-age, incredibly designed equipment," says Eric Villency, who created this rad stationary bike for Peloton. "We're trying to bring that standard to indoor equipment."

Peloton \$1,995 + \$40/month virtual-class subscription









2011 Stan Smith hits the fashion runway, thanks to Céline's Phoebe Philo.

2012 Shaun White brings his tailor to the X Games.

2013 Rapper Travi\$ Scott auditions for Duck Dynasty?

2013 Frank Ocean as Richie Tenenbaum as Björn Borg.

2014 Kids camp outside for Alexander Wang x H&M sweats.

COMING THIS FALL: Kanye's dark, twisted athleisure fantasy with Adidas.



\wedge

Not even lowly sweat shorts could escape a SportsCore makeover.

• Sweat shorts used to mean old sweatpants that met the scissors. These were created for an oxford and crisp low-tops.

clockwise from top left: \$870 Givenchy by Riccardo Tisci at MrPorter.com | \$155 Band of Outsiders | \$98 Saturdays NYC \$75 Polo Ralph Lauren

WHEN SPORTSCORE GOES WRONG!



SHIA'S SAUSAGE CASINGS
• We think compression pants are tight—even in pink—but a gentleman always wears them under shorts.



PITBULL'S CAPRIS
• Wearing a jersey is
SportsCore-approved,
but (1) don't tuck it
in; (2) self-imposed
wedgies are not what's
caliente, papi.

sportscore<mark>style</mark>move



<

The Space Age is now. (At least when it comes to this shirt.)

 Wear a highconcept crewneck with simple jeans for a next-generation look that's not too Star Trek.

sweatshirt \$550 Gucci | jeans Gilded Age watch TAG Heuer



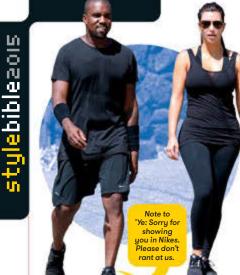


THE BIG DOG OF BIG-TIME SURFING IS NOW IN THE BAJA BUSINESS.



> WHERE DOES the guy who wore Quiksilver as a grom turn when he grows up? In July, Kelly Slater will launch Outerknown, an eco-friendly "coastal lifestyle" collection. The goods, says Slater, "are killer on cool mornings before you head out for a surf."





WE'RE GONNA SKIP THE

COUPLES WORKOUT PLAN.

🔰 I LOVE MY GIRLFRIEND DEARLY. But I have zero interest in working out with her. To me, gyms are the anti-sex: veritable minefields of unattractiveness. (Sweaty mammals in a mirrored box—what could go wrong?) Workout time is a safe zone to blow off steam, sans partner. Supporting each other's well-being—like, say, eating healthy—I'm all for it. But a round of "ass and abs" with my lady? No thanks. When we're done working out separately, we can come together and share in the fruits of our efforts.—SEAN HOTCHKISS



If Ryan Gosling bought the Celtics, se would be their warm-ups \$235 Y-3 | sneakers Adidas Originals



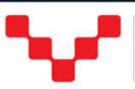
These aren't Iggy Pop's rock-star pants. They're now as thin and comfy as cotton. \$35 **H&M** | sneakers **Canali**



If JFK were alive, his sweats would have a preppy cargo pocket \$495 Michael Bastian sneakers Converse



Put these on once and you might \$168 Wallace & Barnes by J.Crew sneakers Adidas Originals



SPORTSCORE HAS ITS OWN VERSION

The worlds of sports, fashion, music, and Hollywood crash together over a plasticcup cocktail (or sixteen) on the floor at NBA arenas.



Cara and Michelle: The JumboTron cam missed them making out. TMZ did not.



Hey, Justin Bieber: As with any style movement, it's better not to run every SportsCore play at once



HumbleCore rapper Drake takes time away from watching the All-Star Game to serve courtside cocktails to a couple of starstruck NBA fans.



Rihanna gets called for a double dribble.



Spider-Man and the Wolf of Wall **Street** take in the newest routine by the Laker Girls. Not pictured: 11 Victoria's Secret models.



ZEUSKÄAPOLLOVITHLYTAMETELVNET. COURTSIDES STYLEE, FROM LEFT: JAMEE DEVANETY WIREMAGE/GETTY IMAGES. SLADKY/AP PHOTO: JEFF HAYNES/REUTERS: NOEL VASGUEZ/GC, IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; LONDONE NIT/SPLASH NEWS/CORBIS.





There are 820,400 high-fashion running sneakers out now. These are numero uno.

• Take a bow, Sal! The mix of mesh and suede would make Steve Prefontaine do a fist pump in his grave.

\$695 **Salvatore Ferragamo**where to buy it? go to gq.com/go /fashiondirectories

AND THESE ARE THE 9 BEST RUNNING SNEAKERS EVER.







Nike Cortez (1972)



Asics GEL-Lyte III (1990)



Nike Flyknit Racer (2012)



Saucony Jazz (1981)



Onitsuka Tiger Corsair (1974)



Adidas SL72 (1972)



Brooks Chariot (1982)



Nike Air Max 1 (1987)

TAKE A DELOREAN BACK TO 1992.



picture ALL the posters and sports paraphernalia you had as a kid—and all the shirts, jerseys, and sweats you wanted but never got. That's And Still, an under-the-radar store of glorious dead-stock gear in the middle of West

Hollywood's fashion strip.
A trip there is the best way to support your favorite squad during your favorite era like a true fanboy—even if you can't change the outcome of the '94 NBA Finals. (Sorry.)

sportscorestylemove



There's a whole new way to build a three-piece suit.

• Just layer a track jacket, hoodie, or windbreaker under your jacket and bam!—you go from cubicle jockey to first-class flier.

windbreaker \$35 **HSM** | shirt **Z Zegna** suit **Neil Barrett** | pocket square **The Tie Bar**







The only difference between this shirt and a jersey is your name and number.

 You know mesh has been co-opted by the fashion world when Balmain is doing an upscale lax uniform for the street.

sweatshirt \$1,055 **Balmain** jeans **Acne Studios**

sportscoresportswear

DRESS LIKE THE RUNNER YOU WANT TO BE.

> NOT LIKE THE unemployed guy going out for powdered doughnuts.









>

Portland SPORTS CORE CAPITAL

It's the home of a burgeoning SportsCore brand called Nike—and the land of fixed-gear bikes, craft beers, and a new breed of crunchy style shops.

· Any discussion of Portland, Oregon, as a fount of sports style begins (and ends, really) with the place you'd get if you combined a temple, a science lab, and Madison Square Garden: Nike's headquarters, just outside the city in Beaverton. For the rest of us, the whole sneakers-and-techfabrics look leaks over to the city proper, where a host of new

stores and companies are making it easier than ever to dress for adventure—with or without a swoosh. Poler (01) makes outdoor gear for the charming, stylish hippie, while Japanbased Snow Peak (02) sends weatherproof high-tech pants and pullovers straight from camping's future. Frances May (03) carries highfashion clothes with a touch of tech.

while just across the Willamette River, Machus provides dystopian ninja sweats from GQ favorites like John Elliott and Stampd. Grab a bike tune-up (and a beer) at Velo Cult and pedal over to Forest Park, where the hiking trails overlook downtown. All this is to say: Life in Portland means getting active—all the more reason to dress for it.



THE FAST
FASHION
PLAYERS HAVE
ALREADY
JUMPED INTO
THE GAME.
(SO NO NEED
TO BREAK
THE BANK.)



FINDING PASSABLE outdoor gear used to mean picking through racks at Modell's or Dick's, but Urban Outfitters has changed that with their latest push—an active and outdoors-focused in-house label called Without Walls. Check it out if you're ready to ditch your standardissue gym basics for printed compression tights and multicolored windbreakers that'll add just the right dose of weird to your workout.

ıэ**ч gq** april-2015

stylebible2015

A\$AP ROCKY NEEDS SOME

SPACE

New album, new acting gig, maybe a new house large enough to have sex in—as MARY H.K. CHOI found out, 2015 is going to be even bigger for A\$AP ROCKY than we thought

IT'S 1 P.M. ON SUNDAY AND A\$AP Rocky is lying on a sun-bleached wood banquette on the roof of his Hollywood home. With braided hair, an easy smile, and a square jaw, the kid's not nicknamed Pretty Flacko for nothing. And from the canines back, top and bottom, his teeth glitter with pavé diamonds as an extra treat for the human eye. "I know it's some weird shit," Rocky says, fish-hooking his mouth with a finger to show off his new dental work. "But it'll be cooler in two weeks, when it's finished."

Rocky is two all-nighters into a music-making bender and says he's not tired, but he's moving as if underwater and speaking in subdued non sequiturs. "It's still my day before yesterday," he says. And then, of the three-bedroom house with a beautiful kitchen and a treadmill where furniture should be: "I'm gonna miss it here. This was a place to fuck chicks, and I've outgrown it."

Not that Rocky stays in L.A. much. Last year he performed all over the world, riding the wave of his *Billboard*-chart-topping 2013 debut album, *Long.Live.A\$AP*, while also recording his second full-length, due out—well, sometime this year. He's a member of the A\$AP Mob (you might have heard of them) and came up on hits like "Fuckin' Problems," with Drake, Kendrick Lamar, and 2 Chainz (you've definitely heard of 'em), and "Wild for the Night," with Skrillex (you won't admit listening to him).

You may also know Rocky as the rumored ex-fiancé of model Chanel Iman (they broke up last year). And there's a cottage industry devoted to scrutinizing Rocky's impeccable style. When he tucked his screenprinted tee into his jeans in the video for his new album's second single, "Lord Pretty Flacko Jodye 2," *GQ* weighed in. *(continued on page 172)*

there's one magic color that can open any door

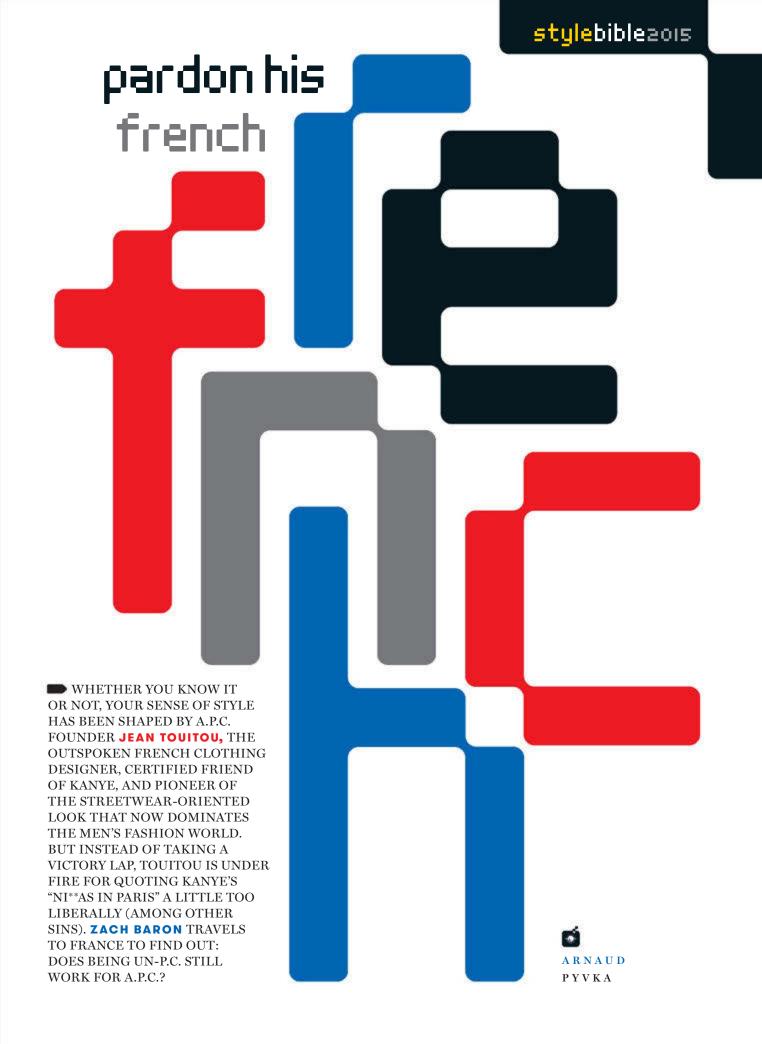
If you're wearing all black, you can go anywhere—from a rap show, say, to a formal dinner. That's what 2015's new look is all about: frictionless movement forward.

coat \$895
Helmut Lang
jacket \$275
Rag & Bone
Standard Issue
jeans \$286
J Brand
grooming by
hee soo kwon for

malin+goetz.

where to buy it? go to gq.com/go /fashiondirectories







PREVIOUS PAGE AND OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT, GROOMING: SEBASTIEN RICHARD AT JED ROOT PARIS. THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF A.P.C. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: MARIANNE CHEMETOV/COURTESY OF A.P.C

leven days after Jean Touitou blew a hole in the utopia he'd spent twenty-eight years building, he sat two floors up in his offices on the Rue Madame, listening to Pink Floyd, surrounded by a swirl of postcards and look-book images, pages of urgently written notes to himself, and samples from a tannery in Italy. A terrified publicist twitched in the corner of the room. Amid the scrawled pages I read the phrase: Shirt, thou shalt tuck in.

On another page, written in blue, the words: *My fault*.

The postcards all have photos displaying the elegant hallmarks of Touitou's label, A.P.C.—piece after piece of clothing exhibiting a kind of charismatic blankness, the component parts of a uniform that gives no evidence of being a uniform. "A certain nolook that is a look," as Touitou describes it. A whole history of accessible cool, laid out on the marble table in front of us: images of perfectly anonymous gray sweatshirts, unaccountably well-draped T-shirts, and the ubiquitous indigo blue of A.P.C. jeans, the stiff, thick Japanese-woven selvage denim that has made Touitou rich and his clothing a menswear staple on three continents.

I had worried about what to wear, meeting him, for the obvious reasons. In retrospect, that was foolish. Like many of my friends who grew up in households rich with polar fleece and department-store denim, I'm a 32-yearold man who basically learned to dress in Touitou's stores—who crossed the line from not knowing anything about clothes to knowing just a little bit (but a dignity-saving little bit) by wearing A.P.C. Back then, and even now, style is a quality I mostly envy in others. But I could wear these clothes. They looked like clothes any man might already own, except better: the colors a bit more subtle, the cuts slimmer, the options edited to the point where it would be hard to make a mistake, even if you were the type of person, like me, inclined toward making mistakes. I wore no A.P.C. to this meeting, but sitting in his office in the first week of February, it still looked like Touitou had dressed not just himself this morning but me as well.

He sat looking at the table, his life's work conspicuously spread out in front of him, a short, mischievous-looking 63-year-old man with a curly gray tangle of hair. I asked, because I could tell he was expecting me to, what it was we were looking at, and why.

"Sometimes you want to look at your past," Touitou said. "I want to remind people what I did, somehow."

Where do you think that impulse comes from, to remind people?

He gave me a long stare. "Take a wild guess," he said finally.

I could guess.

It was only a week and a half ago that Touitou stood downstairs, the winter light in Paris drifting through the skylight above, giving his annual Fashion Week presentation. Unlike most other designers, who spend hundreds of thousands of



Touitou, during a trip to Argentina in 1976, long before he launched A.P.C. dollars marching models down runways wearing steampunk widow veils (as Thom Browne did) or with their dicks exposed (as Rick Owens did), Touitou prefers to merely stand and talk while a handful of models loiter nearby, wearing the clothes. This approach

suits both his brand and his temperament, which is blunt and philosophical by nature; Touitou is more inclined to dwell on Samuel Beckett than on the cut of a pair of pants.

This year was set to be a triumph for A.P.C. Last season in Paris, Touitou introduced the second of his capsule collaborations with his friend Kanye West, both of which were hailed as smart and humane, often by the same people who'd gleefully trashed Kanye's previous solo collections. Streetwear—the industry's term of art for clothing for regular people, or what Touitou has been doing for decades—had arrived at the center of fashion; A.P.C., after years of quiet excellence, found itself there, too.

For this year's presentation, Touitou decided to show a collaboration with the American bootmaker Timberland. The models stood wearing camel overcoats, sweatpants, and the boots as Touitou began to explain the name of the collection, a mash-up





of a song by Kanye and Jay Z and the movie Last Tango in Paris. Touitou held up a sign that said last NI##@\$ IN PARIS and, in the course of explaining how he arrived at the wording, lost the # signs, and then the @ sign, and finally the \$ sign, saying the slur aloud more than once. He said the look represented "the sweet spot when the hood—the 'hood-meets Bertolucci's movie Last Tango in Paris." He went on: "The Timberland here is a very strong ghetto signifier." Five days later, after a Style.com report on the presentation that included the bracketed phrase "[Nervous laughter from audience]," Touitou belatedly realized he was in serious trouble and apologized. Around the same time, Timberland dropped him as a collaborator, issuing a press release that said, in part, that the company would "not tolerate offensive language or racial slurs of any kind being associated with the Timberland brand."

Now he was pacing the room, looking at photos of things he'd done. "I was totally ignorant in choosing some wording that to me was pretty natural, since I thought

I was quoting a piece of popular music," he said quietly. "Of course, if I knew, I wouldn't have said this word. But then I got, I got caught in something so...so violent. Maybe this is why I want to show what I've been doing for the past twenty-seven years."

He looked tortured, not just by what he'd done but by the effort he was expending, even now, to self-censor. Touitou's natural mode is a kind of free-jazz ramble that purposefully acknowledges no boundaries. "Fraternité has one big enemy," he said. "It's called 'politically correct.'"

So even as he was genuinely sorry—"My fault is my ignorance. Period. And this is why I apologize after, because I think I'm ignorant of a certain code"—he couldn't help but mention other instances of other people doing the same thing and getting away with it. "By the way, John Lennon, in '72, he was ignorant, too—"

The publicist, crouching in the corner, began to rapidly clear his throat, recognizing the coming reference to "Woman Is the N**** of the World," but Touitou plunged ahead, eyes fixed on the table.

"I'm a freedom fighter. I think nothing else. And I understand that today's word is caught into some contradictions that I should have been more aware of. I'm surprising myself, because I've been around. But not enough, maybe."



IN PARIS, HE AND I TALK ABOUT THIS FOR maybe a half hour more and then we move on, but let's linger here just a moment longer, because the reality is that this presentation will probably haunt Touitou and A.P.C. for years to come—perhaps

deservedly so. But without defending words that have no intelligent defense, I do want to suggest that there is an unhappy irony here. Not just for Touitouwho for years seemed like the least likely guy in fashion to say something clueless and dumb about race, until he said something clueless and dumb about race-but for those of us who have been drawn to A.P.C. and what it represented. If you cared about clothes, Touitou and A.P.C. offered a subtly tasteful but also subtly inclusive way of interacting with the world that was pretty much the opposite of whatever, say, John Galliano was doing-not just in the anti-Semitic-tirade sense but also in the aesthetic one. For decades, A.P.C.

Touitou, above right, delivering one of his recent Fashion Week presentations; French model Julia Restoin Roitfeld, below, shot for an A.P.C. ad campaign in 1996.

offered all of us a wearable, thoughtful alternative to the fashion world's not-infrequent moral and stylistic nonsense. Without feeling sorry for the guy or his business, you can feel sorry about the end of that.

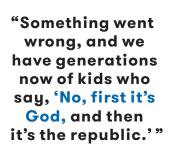
The following is a train of wild generalizations that should probably never appear in any men's fashion magazine, let

alone *GQ*, but let's attempt it anyway. The fashion world, even the relatively restrained men's version of it, is intimidating, right? Exclusionary, even. I would not know how to put on a Givenchy kilt or how to have a conversation with Karl Lagerfeld, should either leathery circumstance arrive, and I do not think I'm alone. Even to wear something as simple and cool and patently beautiful as Hedi Slimane's Saint Laurent is to basically be a member of Daft Punk: It requires more taste, more Continental swagger, and more money than 99.99 percent of us have.

But A.P.C. was, and is, approachable, or as approachable as any brand selling threefigure Japanese denim can be. Democratic, even. It is no coincidence that when Kanye West went in search of a fashion-world patron, he was essentially laughed out of every room he walked into until he arrived at Touitou's offices. "There have been ways that people have been able to jump from being a musician to doing clothing, but it has never been consistent," West told me last summer. "It's never been respected to the A.P.C. level." Until, that is, A.P.C. collaborated with him. Designers are happy to have stylish celebrities like Kanye and Rihanna sit front row at their shows; very few of them are willing to give them keys to their ateliers and factories.

Touitou was willing. He had high-level taste but bestowed it freely. And we benefited. Thanks to A.P.C., we were part of a cool little intercontinental sartorial utopia of men in selvage jeans, as silly as that sounds.

Which is pretty silly, now that Touitou's said what he said. *(continued on page 172)*

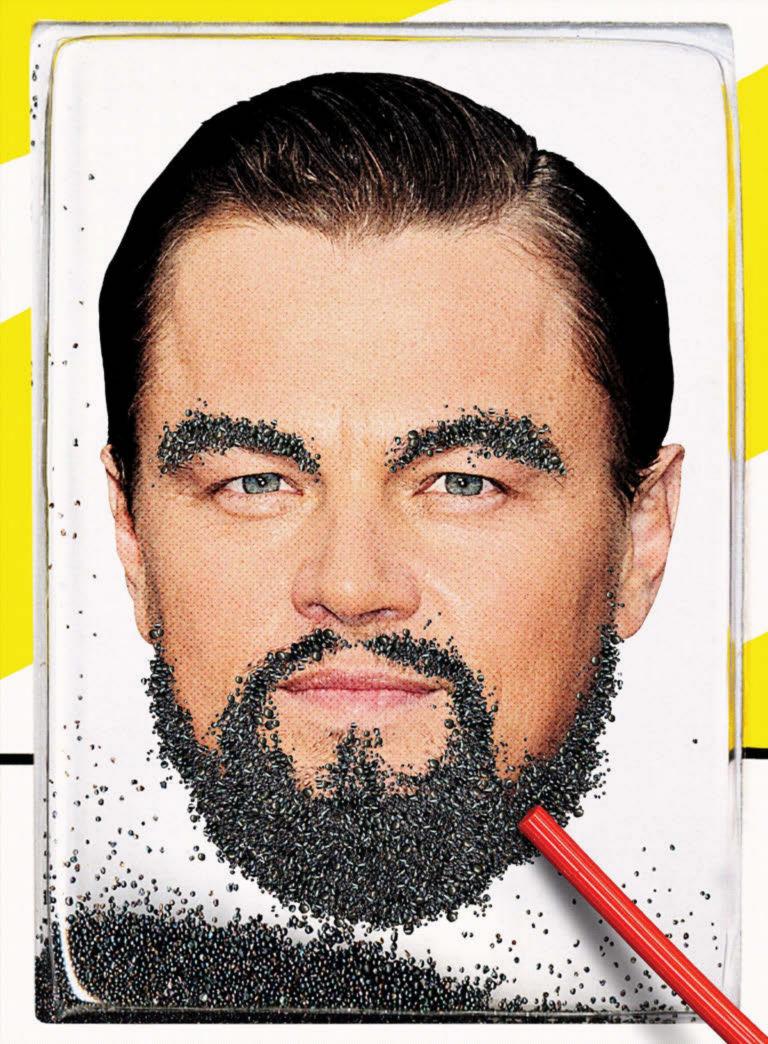




stylebiblezois

WELCOME TO THE REBIRTH OF THE MUG-RUG. IT'S NOT ENOUGH THAT DAMN NEAR EVERY HOLLYWOOD ACTOR AND STYLISH ATHLETE IS SPORTING A METICULOUSLY GROOMED BEARD THESE DAYS—NOW EVEN CEOS IN CORNER OFFICES ARE BRISTLING, TOO. AND IF YOU'RE BEING HONEST, YOU'RE READY TO JOIN THE BEARD-WAGON YOURSELF. HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT







first

STOP THE **STUBBLE CYCLE**

LOOK IN THE MIRROR. If you're like me, you're probably staring at some stubble—growing wherever the hell it damn well pleases, a touch splotchier than you'd like. You shave one day, let your hair grow in for a week, maybe two, then you mow it down and start all over again. This is the Stubble Cycle. You're trying to have your beard both ways—there, but not too there—which means that you just look like you're coming off a drunken bender. As my father often yelled at drivers who obliviously sat at a green light: Piss or get off the pot. Man up. Try the beard. It'll take a month, maybe two, to grow in—but then you will look in the mirror again and you will see a new man, a hairier man, a prouder man.—Jon wilde

THE JOY OF THE TEMPO-BEARD



Some Men have facial hair that's old enough to drink, but true connoisseurs understand that beards are gloriously impermanent. Athletes break them out for the playoffs. Jon Hamm seemed to grow one after every season of *Mad Men*—as if going full Sasquatch were his true resting state—then shaved when the show started shooting again. Point being, a great beard doesn't have to live forever. It can just be a break from the usual. Facial hair is cheaper than a whole new wardrobe, less fraught than a radical new haircut. You might decide to shave off your beard six months later. Or you might fall in love with the resting-Hamm look and keep it forever.— J. w.

FADING, FAST

The secret to a pro-grade beard is a pro-grade neck fade. And look, here's pro barber Miles Elliot of Freemans Sporting Club Barbershop in N.Y.C. on how to do just that



STEP 1

"First, trim your entire beard to the desired length before you begin fading," says Elliot. (See "Get into Gear" on the right for hardware.)



STEP 2

Start your neck fade by using the 2 or 3 guard to trim from your Adam's apple to where your jaw meets your neck. Then use the 1 or 2 guard to trim from the Adam's apple upward about an inch or so. Anything below the Adam's apple should be as hairless as we assume Joe Jonas's scrotum to be.



STEP 3

Tidying up the cheeks is a delicate dance. With the guardless trimmer, eradicate the outliers. "You don't want a line so sharp that your beard looks like a chin strap," says Elliot. In beards, as with breasts, natural is always better.



STEP 4

"Last, clean up your mustache by trimming any hairs growing over the lip," says Elliot. You're a man, not a walrus.

A BEARD IS LIKE SPANX (IN A GOOD WAY)

Have a weak chin? Charlie Brown head? A burgeoning beer gut?
You can offset it all with facial hair. Seriously. "A beard hides your face shape, so you can create your own," says Alex Josue, barber at Baxter Finley Barber & Shop in L.A. Here, advice from Josue on how a well-sculpted beard can lead to a less ugly you



The Problem: Bowling-Ball Head

"Let's say your face is very round," says Josue. "You want to introduce more angles to it, so trim the cheek line"—from your 'burns to your 'stache—"to a slightly more drastic slant than grows naturally."

The Problem: Square Hair

"The high and tight haircut with the short, cropped sides is trending now," says Josue, "but it makes the head more square, right? I like to offset that with a beard that's kept short with rounded edges."

The Problem: Beer Gut

"For someone who's stockier, bring in the sides of the beard," says Josue. "Just trim straight down from your ears and cheekbones so that part's slightly shorter than your goatee area."

The Problem: Scarecrow Body

"If you're tall and lanky like me, you don't want sharp points or angles in your beard, or you might look like a super-villain," says Josue. "Keep everything natural and more rounded."



JUST SAY NO TO THE **PUFFY TUT**

bad beards. Wait, yes there are

THE KING STRAP

The NBA's most complete player needs a complete beard. 'Stache up, LeBron!



THE PUFFY TUT

Scott Ian of Anthrax is doing Locks of Love the wrong way.



CALAMARI CHIN

Don't know if we should have petted Brad Pitt's fringe or dipped it in cocktail sauce.



THE COMPENSATOR

We get it, former Dodgers relieve Brian Wilson, You can grow a beard.



THE POSEIDON

Prove to us that Donald Sutherland doesn't rule the sea, YOU CAN'T.



get into gear

Know what separates the bearded weirdos from the bearded heroes? Upkeep. You don't need a laser-guided vacuuming trimmer—just a few key tools.—KRISTEN DOLD



Tom Ford / Beard Comb

Two benefits: It'll get all the hairs moving in the same direction. And it'll make your hands feel huge. \$35, tomford.com



Wahl / Stainless Steel Li+ Trimmer

Thanks to an adjustable guard and a lasts-for-ages battery, this is your primary weapon in tending a beard. \$70, wahlgrooming.com



Billy Jealousy / Beard Control

A tinu bit of this stuff will tame big wiru beards so you don't look like you're fronting a ZZ Top cover band. \$20, billyjealousy.com



Prospector Co. / Burroughs Beard Oil

Rub in five drops to prevent dryness (your skin thanks you) and to soften your beard hair (the ladies thank you). \$28, prospectorco.com





YOU'LL SEE BEARD SHAMPOO on the shelf of those twee, sage-scented drugstores that call themselves apothecaries. Keep walking. "Regular shampoo or conditioner works just fine on a beard, so long as it's not a harsh dandruff wash," says Rob McMillen, head barber for Blind Barber in N.Y.C. More important: Scrub well enough with your daily face wash to clean out all the junk—dirt, bacteria, lunch—that'll be hiding inside your beard.— K.D.





A WOMANLY PLEA

BEWARE OF THIGH-BURN

A RULE OF THUMB

for keeping your facial hair sexfriendly: As below, so above.

Ideally, your face will travel to the same delicate places as your junk, and unruly, scratchy, stubbly hair is as problematic on the face as in the ol' pubic region. Many a lady has seen Yosemite Sam fall onto a cactus and thought, "Been there, girlfriend." So exercise care.

If you're lucky enough to have a big, lush beard, keep it neat of silhouette to avoid poking her

eyes during sex. If you have a shag rug on your face, comb out the trash and loose whiskersno woman likes stopping the action to pick lumberjack floss from her teeth.

Alternately, if you're keeping your beard fairly short, run the back of your hand over it to be sure you won't cause thigh-burn while going down on her. And for the love of God, refrain from aggressive sanding motions while you're there. She's a lady, not an antique credenza. -JULIEANNE SMOLINSKI

stylebiblezois

suki waterhouse is homecoming-queen hot. She's tall and thin—but not freakishly either—with an ever parted mouth that could use a good washing out, and she seems poised to be Hollywood's next bro-down girl. The established model and burgeoning actress has scored a smiley but physically fearsome role in The Divergent Series: Insurgent (training, according to Suki, included learning to reckon with an arsenal of faux firearms and occasionally bouncing around on trampolines), as well as one in Pride and Prejudice and Zombies (she auditioned with a martial-arts sequence).

Speaking from the churning waters of a Los Angeles hot tub (after a "really stretchy" yoga session that "was really fucking great, actually"), Bradley Cooper's British-born paramour admits that her upcoming catalog of athletic portrayals isn't without precedent. "I'm quite strong for a girl," she says. "I studied karate growing up—I'm a brown belt and me and my sister used to beat the crap out of each other." Waterhouse she of the permanently post-coital-looking blonde hair and heavyweight eyebrowssays she was the undisputed (though accidental) perpetrator of three serious injuries sustained by her good childhood friend: knocked-out front tooth (game of rounders), broken ankle (ice-skating), "snapped" Achilles tendon (bumper cars). "Isn't that disgusting?" she says, then laughs.

In the years since, Waterhouse has apparently worked to contain some of that kinetic anarchy. When Insurgent wrapped up filming in Atlanta, she returned home to L.A., a city whose topography seems to suit Waterhouse better than her native London's. "There's something very uplifting about being able to run uphill in between meetings," she says. "It's sick."—ALICE GREGORY

MORE

Photos of Suki, plus a library a really, really hot library of the many other women of *GQ*



GQ.COM



THE 23-YEAR-OLD BRIT SUKI WATERHOUSE IS THE REIGNING IT GIRL OF THE FASHION WORLD AND THE RISING INSTAGRAM GIRL OF THAT CREW OF FILTHY-MOUTHED, THICK-EYEBROWED, IMPISHLY IRREVERENT BABES WHO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT MODELS ARE HAVING WAY MORE FUN THAN ANYONE ELSE RIGHT NOW





WHEN IT COMES TO WEATHER, APRIL MEANS... ACTUALLY, THESE DAYS WE HAVE NO FREAKING CLUE WHAT IT MEANS. THAT'S WHY DESIGNERS INVENTED A NEW HYBRID COAT WE SIMPLY CALL THE SHELL: IT'S PART RAINCOAT, PART PARKA, PART THAT THING YOU NEED EVERY DAY THIS TIME OF YEAR. TO SHOW YOU HOW TO WEAR ONE, WE HIT THE STREETS WITH TUNDE ADEBIMPE OF TV ON THE RADIO—A BAND AS STORMY AS MOTHER NATURE HERSELF

stylebible2015

takethe





tv's anchor

TUNDE ADEBIMPE is not an easy man to categorize. But gun to the head, file him under his own micro-genre—something like polymath rock. Plenty of people know him strictly as the voice—sometimes joyous, often melancholic, always out in front—of the indie-pop band TV on the Radio, others solely from roles in films like Rachel Getting Married, and still more only for his video direction or his culty comic book. These high-speed lanes of creative expression often converge with one another, which is why TVOTR have always felt less like a major-label band and more like an art collective that fund-raises through record sales. On TVOTR's latest effort, Seeds, they sound as ever like a band that's equal parts soulful and electronic, a rock 'n' roll machine with a beating heart.

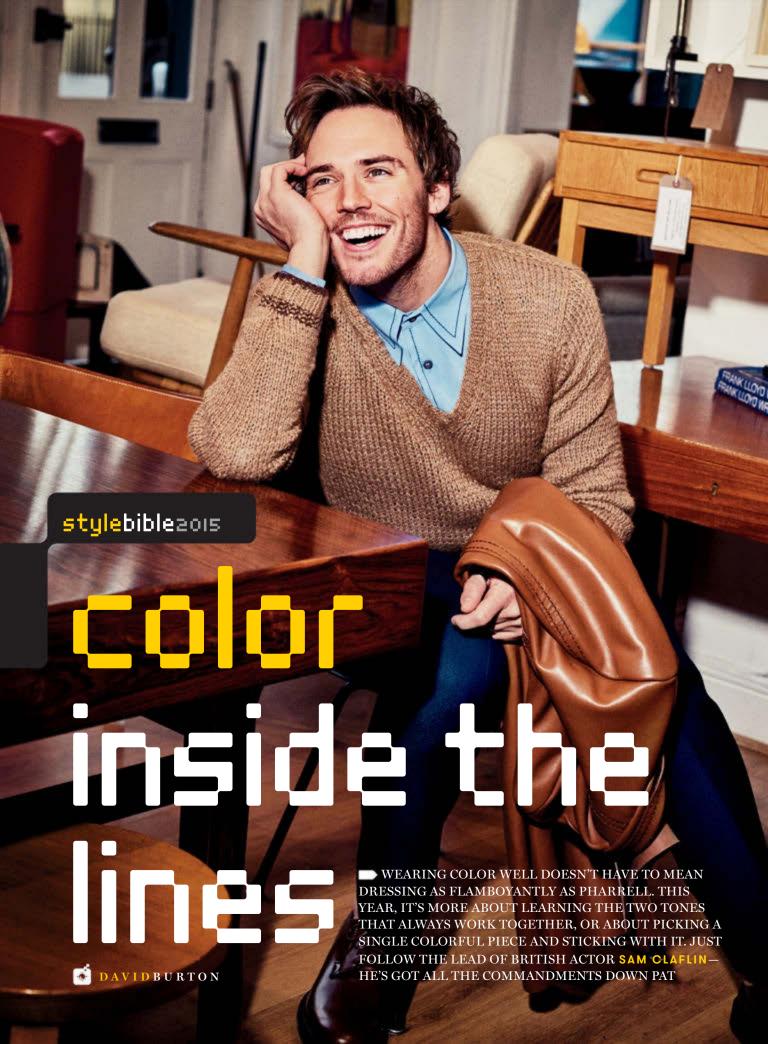
In conversation, Tunde, 40, speaks in the spiritual sci-fi prose that powers TVOTR tracks like "Lazerray" (Now I'm a solar flare / Now I'm that light that rages). He characterizes, say, the surreal experience of making art amid Ferguson protests at Art Basel Miami Beach as "a very weird mix of chemicals." Less obliquely, he describes the band's shift toward "a documentary or multimedia thing, with a website or a TV show"—a direction that aligns with his growing profile as an actor. His latest lead role is as a gay man reluctantly attempting to reproduce with Kristen Wiig. The title of the film, Nasty Baby, nicely captures the paradoxical draw of Tunde's art. Or in Tunde terms: "It's all so stupid. Racism and sexism and homophobiaall of it. We're just gonna say Fuck You to all of that and try to make something beautiful. Maybe it'll just be a big Fuck You. But it's that sense of We don't know what's going to happen, but we're gonna find out."-EDWIN "STATS" HOUGHTON















classywarfare

PERHAPS NO DEMOGRAPHIC has benefited more from the rise of teen-movie franchises than young Brits. Twilight's Robert Pattinson, Theo James of Divergent, the Hemsworth brothers (Aussie, but same deal). The latest in the invasion is Sam Claflin, best known to American audiences as Finnick Odair from the last couple of Hunger Games. When we meet Finnick in the second film, he looks like a SoCal bro who "forgot" to put on a shirt. In the latest, the third, Mockingjay, Part I (try to keep up), he's in gulag grays and suffering PTSD but somehow no less winning.

Claflin, who got into acting at 16 after giving up his dreams of soccer, says that after The Hunger Games he was eager to play something other than a hunk with a trident. In this spring's The Riot Club, a satire about a fictitious dining club at Oxford, he's a one-percenter who gets to unironically scream lines like "I am sick to fucking death of poor people!" and throw his champagne glass at the wall. Despite the regal jawline and tousled locks, Claflin himself grew up workingclass. What he found most surprising about these societies wasn't simply how money can buy you out of anything, but also how thuggish these groups of supposed gentlemen can be. There's a moment in the film when someone insinuates that they're acting no better than schoolkids with bricks. "My character takes huge offense because We're gentlemen, we've got money—we're not thugs. But it's basically just gang culture in the upper class." The Hunger Games also treads in class warfare, though the chief concern playing Finnick, Claflin admits, was that "I was never sure whether to leave underwear on or take underwear off in the tanning bed." We didn't notice any tan lines.—SARAH GOLDSTEIN



LAIVE DIL V 24 HOURS 7 DAYS Tel. 071-729



another godlike fashion formula

Just like brown and blue, khaki and white always look killer together. The obvious place to start is with khaki pants—but to give the combo more pop, try it with white jeans and a khaki jacket instead.

iacket \$249 Paige Denim hoodie \$198 John Elliott + Co ieans \$445 Dsauared2 shoes \$690 Crockett & Jones watch Boca MMXII location Hoi Polloi. Shoreditch High Street, London

quadrupledown on denim

There's a new movement in men's style we call onecolor dressing. The idea is to pile on multiple shades and textures of the same basic color. The easiest place to start is with blue denim pieces in various dips, dyes, and states of distress.

page) \$295 cardiaan \$395 shirt \$125 t-shirt \$85 ieans \$185 Polo Ralph Lauren shoes \$495 A.P.C. belt John Varvatos triumph spitfire from GT Classic Hire

Barber & Parlour, Redchurch Street

peacoat (opposite

dip your khakis in blood

Wearing color doesn't have to mean uellow on top of purple on top of pink. A simple pair of blood red chinos can give you the same jolt of style and attitude—and you don't need a degree from art school to pull it off.

blazer \$2,250 t-shirt \$195 pants \$650 sneakers \$650 Gucci watch Timex

location Beigel Bake, Brick Lane

grooming by larry king at streeters london. produced by the production club.





Lately it feels like our favorite bars and hotels and restaurants and stores have been doing more than just slinging a great rib eye or stocking a killer sweater. They're making us feel at home, like we should move into the corner booth and sign a lease, not a credit card receipt. They've become the most comfortable, invigorating, exciting spaces in our lives—and now it's time to rip them off. We've cribbed design moves from twenty-three hot spots that you can transplant to your own pad. And this is just a start. Keep your eyes open—and your camera app ready.

Give Your Home That Hotel Glow

Chiltern Firehouse, London

• The best André Balazs properties play a funny trick on you: They make you believe that—here, tonight, at this moment—anything is possible. Like, anything.
I'm talking about the Chateau Marmont in L.A., the Boom Boom Room in N.Y.C., and his new hotel in London, Chiltern Firehouse, which includes the guests-only bar you see here, home of the twenty most coveted seats in the world right now.

The magic in these places is simple—Balazs alchemizes sex appeal. But beg him to reveal how he does it and he'll play coy, except to say that the key is lighting. "It's like a cocktail," he says. "You can taste the difference between a good old-fashioned and one that's just a mix of ingredients. Lighting is equally sensitive. There's an art to it and a deep science."

Yes! So, um, exactly what does that mean for those of us reading from home, André? "You need a lot of fixtures," he says. "Quadruple the number you think. And you need every kind: spotlight, down light, up light, ambient. A lot of ambient light. Everyone should glow." Now take another look at this shot of the Chiltern. Look past the alabaster bar, the custom wicker stools, the slightly insane Boca Raton-ready carpet no one else would've chosen. What makes it all work together are the asterisks of light across the top of the alcove, and the lamps planted in the bar, and the shades suspended from the ceiling, and the wall sconces, and... Like Balazs said, about four times as many light fixtures as you think you need.—WILL WELCH



JOIN THE COMMUNE

Lessons from the West Coast's Best Design Team

• In 2004, three friends united to form a design collective, because California. A decade later, Commune is one of the West Coast's most sought-after interior stylists, imbuing warmth and modernism in both Cali-located Ace Hotels, the American Trade Hotel in Panama, the Farmshop Marin restaurant two pages back...and the list goes on. It earned that rep because it doesn't blindly apply the same exact formula to every space it designs. Annoyingly, that means Commune creative director Roman Alonso and company have no foolproof, put-a-bird-on-it rules. But they do have a very peaceful Golden State ethos you can borrow.

DECORATE LIKE

A LOCAVORE

When Commune designed the Ace Hotel in Palm Springs, it employed a cluster of mostly California craftspeople to bring its desert pool party to life.

From the lobbydoor hardware to the restaurant's stained glass, everything was crafted within a 200-mile radius. LESSON: Put down that Ikea shelf and have one built by the guy down the street.

KEEP ART

IN THE FAMILY

Commune hired artist Mike Mills to make pieces for all 182 rooms in the Downtown L.A. Ace Hotel. The 182 businesscard-sized works riff off L.A. events from 1927, when



· Late last year,

Commune put out

a retrospective of

its first ten years of California

good-times-and-

design. There's

a hell of a lot of

style to steal from

its pages, but even

setting the book

table makes for a

on your coffee

good start.

sunshine-inflected

the Ace's building went up.

LESSON:

Commissioning one sinale artist to fill your walls is probably a pipe dream. Luckily, Commune's intent was to use art as a uniting force for a space. Find works you love, then add more pieces with the same subject, style, or color.

DON'T REDECORATE,

RE-PERFECT

'Redecorating is totally out of style," says Alonso. "It implies waste, and that's not the world we live in." LESSON: Make sure the biggest pieces-the bed frame, the sofa, the kitchen tableare relentlessly classic. Then you

bring in gutsier, of-the-moment style with pieces that you can easily re-invent: pillows (swap the covers), throw blankets (graphic as hell), lamps (get new shades), chairs you can reupholster. A little foresight means never getting bored.





Reupholsterable furniture at the American Trade having an excuse for being bored.

chairs and tables.

The Exquisite Surfaces showroom in Chicago: the most peaceful you'll ever feel while buying flooring.





Hotel means never



Commune:

Designed in California

\$60

communeshop.com



Wallpaper You Won't Be Bored with Next Week

It's back, bigger and bolder than any paint. Here are three that would make Benjamin Moore blush.



MONSTERS BE HERE

→ At Santa Monica's Palihouse hotel, sea beasts from Abnormals Anonymous populate the bedrooms.



MAKE WAVES

→ Farrow & Ball's graphic "Aranami" debuted in a 2014 New York Fashion Week pop-up lounge, so the style cred is strong.



KICK THE WALLS

→ JugoFresh juice bar in Miami uses a green version of Flavor Paper's camo, but we dig this Air Jordan– esque version.

Wallpaper now is more like super-scale art. The patterns are so strong that papering just one wall draws the eye and makes the room look bigger, because you're looking deeper into the space. It has a major effect without a major commitment."

-JON SHERMAN, FOUNDER OF FLAVOR PAPER

BITE BUY THEIR STYLE



The Slow Burn

Paris's historic Hôtel Costes sells its sexy rum-scented candle online now. Hallelujah! \$51, shop.hotelcostes.com



DIY Rasta Stool

Crib Miss Lily's moves (see right) with an inexpensive barstool and your local furniture upholsterer.



Imperfect Pottery

These trippy, drippy ceramics from RTH Shop add just a touch of vision-quest flair. From \$25, 310-289-7912

GO BIG AND GO HOME The Case for a Theme

We get it: The idea of a themed house even just a room—seems crazy. But what you can take from these four places is that when you amplify a singular design idea, it only gets better.

NO.1 »

GO HARD LIKE GRANDMA

The Bachelor Farmer, Minneapolis
The restaurant's interior designer, Janet
Gridley, found inspiration in photos of old
recording studios strewn with knit blankets
and rugs for sound dampening. "I wanted
a modern take," says Gridley, who scored
most of the eighty or so afghans on Etsy.
Not into crocheting? The larger idea here
is that where one is good, one hundred
is better, whether that's vintage cameras or
framed concert tees.—SEAN HOTCHKISS

NO.2

JUST, LIKE, LOOSEN UP, MAAAN RTH Shop, L.A.

Both RTH stores—near each other on North La Cienega—are living mood boards for a vision of a peyote-inflected Wild West Coast birthed by owner René Holguin. They're an ever evolving home to glazed ceramics (see left), mind-expanding patterns, and lots of raw-wood furniture rubbed with varying blends of linseed, cedarwood, and/or vetiver oils that help give each store a signature scent. "The simpler the furniture, the more versatile it is," Holguin says. "Unfinished wood ages nicely—it warms up and it darkens. You can't fake that."—J. c.

NO.3 »

STAY GOLDEN, PREPPY BOY

The Polo Bar, N.Y.C.

Ralph Lauren's third restaurant is classic with a smirk, and does for your mood what his clothes do for your style—make it better. The Polo Bar works because it's Ralph on overdrive: acres of brown leather with throw pillows made from woolen blankets, plus nine pieces of horse-themed art where one would suffice. That's how you take your pad from house to clubhouse.—Jon wilde

NO.4

DON'T CALL IT TIKI

Miss Lily's 7A, N.Y.C.

Want to know what it's like inside Bunny Wailer's brain? Step into Miss Lily's 7A. You hear the perfectly curated island soundtrack, and then you see it—in the vinyl-printed wallpaper, the custom camocovered stools (see left), and the clashing patterns, all delivering intense '80s-dinermeets-Jamaica vibes. These aren't your mom's Overstock.com tiki torches; this is a love poem to an island.—MYLES HENRY









The tonal look is big in the fashion scene at the moment. And now some of the most sharply dressed spaces we've seen are teaching us how monochromatic style can make a room feel manly, inviting, or—you know—crazy macabre sexy.



BLACKED OUT

Tom Ford, London → The lounge-like menswear nook of Tom Ford's London flagship shows why dark doesn't mean sex dungeon. Two key lessons: Vary the textures—glossy marble, velveteen fabrics, wood—and let go of the belief that black and brown don't mix. Where black brings the elegant cool, Tom Ford's chocolate rug injects soothing soul.



THE PRICE IS WHITE

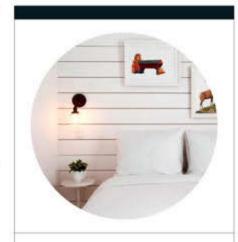
The Rose Hotel, L.A. → Want to make simple and affordable look rich and classy? Steal from The Rose Hotel, a surfer crash pad, and give your space the Tom Wolfe treatment. Use warm whites everywhere: the walls, the upholstery, the linens. Beyond that, The Rose effuses chillness with minimal decorations (your wallet says thank you) and lots of natural wood.



RED ALERT

Castel, Paris

→ Walk into Paris club
Castel and your blood
gets hotter. The secret?
Lots of red. "It makes
everyone look great and
act crazy," says coowner André Saraiva.
So if he brought red
into the home, where
would it go? "In the
bedroom!" he says. "To
keep it from looking
douchey, use a lacquer
red with a touch of
orange. Like fresh blood."



GET THAT GREEN, YO

→ Follow the lead of Salt House
Inn, a serene coastal B&B in
Provincetown, Massachusetts,
and perch small hits of potted
greenery around your pad—on a
kitchen table, a nightstand, maybe
that bookcase over there. Every
plant is another place you can't
clutter with mail or expense receipts.
Lazy N.Y.C.'ers can get next-day
delivery from The Sill, which is doing
for plants what Warby Parker did
for specs: making them easy to buy
and nice to look at.—MARK BYRNE





THIS PAGE, STILL LIFES: JOSEPHINE SCHIELE (2). PROP SYLIST: TRINA ONG AT HALLEY RESOURCES. OTHER IMAGES, CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF LOUIS TERAN; COURTESY OF GLEN LUCHFORD; COURTESY OF ROMAN AND WILLIAMS AND LESLIE WILLIAMSON.

5 Moves from the World's Most Imitated Design Duo

· Stephen Alesch and Robin Standefer, the husband-andwife duo behind Roman and Williams. invented the Bunvanmeets-Brooklyn aesthetic-reclaimed wood, industrial fixtures, Edison bulbs aplenty—at places like N.Y.C.'s Ace Hotel and the Freehand hostel in Miami. But just as the world hijacks their style, they're shifting to stay fresh—and willing to help you do the same.

DARKEN UP

"We always paint ceilings dark," Alesch says, mentioning The Dutch, a restaurant in N.Y.C. "It's like being outdoors: You get the feeling of infinity. Start in the bedroom, where a dark ceiling is so sexy."

DON'T BE

GUN-SHY

Tru-Oil Gun Stock Finish, for the wood of rifles," says Alesch. "We buff it three or four times for the tables at the Upland. It's beautiful and natural. None of that goopy varnish stuff."

"We came upon



"Too many mirrors can look tacky," Alesch warns. "It reeks of vanity and self-absorption. If you have a mirror, pivot it to the

window so it sees

more outside." SHINE BRIGHT

For a swank feel, douse wood in high-gloss paint or top it with a reflective surface (like black glass).

1
Brass accents (like the chairbacks) were used at N.Y.C.'s
Boom Boom Room to add a manly touch.

At Upland in N.Y.C. you're eating off tables treated like a 12-gauge shotgun's wooden stock.

The daybed in Roman and Williams's office. "A daybed makes any room more comfortable," says Standefer. "It gives you that glam attitude," say Standefer.

AXE THE AXE

"Unless they're incorporated into your life, don't decorate with old tools or treat artifacts as art," Alesch cautions. "It's clichéd."







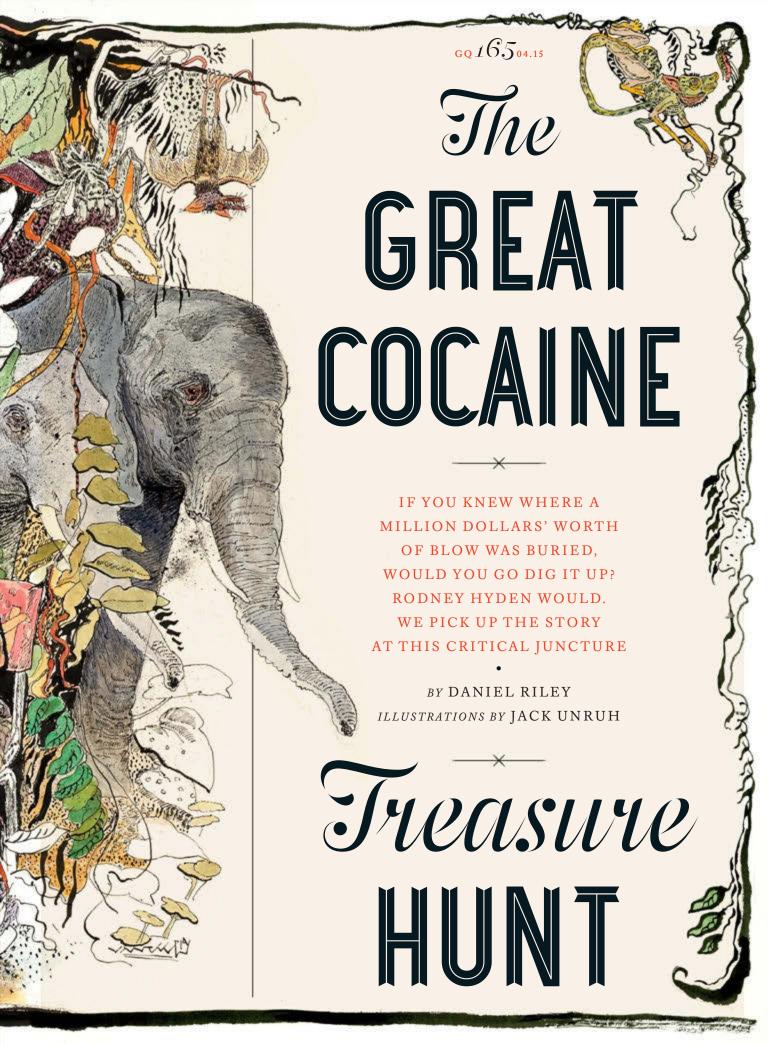


Make Your Backyard Stand Front and Center

Hotel Saint Cecilia, Austin

• Welcome to the Saint Cecilia, a place both smart and debaucherous. You hear it in the late-'60s psych and folk rock floating through the rooms and see it in the neon SOUL sign over the pool. Now, we're not saying you need your own custom neon installation over your patio—though Thatneonsign.com will happily help. What the Saint Cecilia does (and you should do) is treat the outdoors like the indoors. Give it a focal point and a personality that makes it yours and not just an advertisement for the Orkin man.—J.c.





Julian told that story. Tulian told that story. Twas the sort of story that imbued the mind with possibility. That Julian told that story. It was the sort of story that lingered like campfire smoke in a sweater.

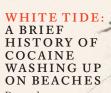
But it wasn't just the particulars of the story-Julian burying the million-dollar stash of coral-white cocaine he'd found washed up on the beach in Culebra—that captured Rodney Hyden's imagination. It was the sounds of the story—the slithering South Carolina accent, the whistly snicker at parts that weren't funny to anyone but Julian. And the picture of the storyteller, too. The silver hair down around Julian's shoulders, the big Gandalf beard distracting from his slight frame, the bare feet, and always that Mason jar of wine that kept bottoming out and filling right back up again.

Friday nights, about eight or ten of the men who lived out there on the edge of Archer, Florida, not far from Gainesville, got together for happy hour at the fire pit by Watermelon Pond. They grilled out, ran southern rock through a sound system, and polished off bottles of beer (or in Julian's case, jars of wine). Even to the beer drinkers, Julian had a way of making wine look good. The first time Rodney heard the story, a Friday in July 2004, he could tell by the way the others reacted, the way they oversold their delight at the laugh lines, that this was not the first time they'd heard it. Turns out Julian had been telling the same damn story for years. Especially when someone new, like Rodney, came around. And with good reason, Julian always started with the turtles.

Julian Howell and his wife moved to Culebra, an island off Puerto Rico, in 1986 to work for the sea-turtle-preservation project. For hundreds of years, on account of people eating the turtles and their eggs (the eggs an alleged aphrodisiac), the turtles' numbers had been dwindling. So for several hours each day for a decade, Julian walked the beaches of Culebra, looking for signs of turtles. Often the beaches were empty-no sign of anything, turtle or human. But one day, amidst a profound ordinariness, Julian spotted a plastic-wrapped bale, about the shape and weight of a large piece of luggage, just plopped there in the froth of the tide. He approached it tentatively, as though it were an animal that might wake. As he got closer, he peered over both shoulders to see if anyone else was around, if anyone had dibs.

He'd heard about this sort of thing down here, even on Culebra-drugs that had been tossed overboard or dropped from a plane, missing their target and washing ashore. It was almost funny. He'd been walking around the island for nine years now, looking for something to smoke, thinking, Okay, God, where's my bale? And here it was, perhaps: forty, fifty, sixty pounds. Think of how long it would last him! Still, it was wrapped so thoroughly in plastic and rubber, he couldn't tell for sure what he was dealing with. Weed, he hoped. But it could be coke, or something else. He wasn't certain it was worth the risk. In an effort to buy more time, he dragged the package up the beach, dug a depression near the rocks, and covered it with leaves and debris.

He mulled it over for weeks, until curiosity overwhelmed him. After putting in his hours at the bar one night, he built up enough courage to head back to the beach. It was one in the morning, but there was enough moonlight to find the bale and ease it up into the bed of his pickup. He hauled it home, then hid it in his toolshed for a couple more weeks. Finally, after waiting for his wife to leave for work one day, he took a kitchen knife to one of the wrapped segments, just to get a better look. What flaked off was white, pink-white. Cocaine. He strapped the bale to his back and stood on the bathroom scale, did some quick math: The coke weighed seventy pounds. Thirty-two kilos, wrapped thoughtfully in sixteen double-kilo bundles. Street value at the time: anywhere from \$16,000 to \$20,000 per kilo, depending on which street. Though those sorts of numbers weren't on Julian's radar.



Do you have any idea how much blow gets dumped in the ocean every year? Neither do we, but as this global sampling shows. even Charlie Sheen would be impressed. -HILARY ELKINS

GALVESTON, TEXAS August 2011 WEIGHT AND LOCAL VALUE: 55 pounds, \$2 million

"We'll never know," one local authority concluded, "unless a body washes up behind it."

capture.

FUN FACT: Cocaine

reportedly available

at the grocery store!



traffickers routinely 220 pounds, nearly forced to dump \$10 million product to elude Four blue oil drums.

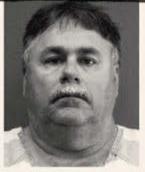
pounds, \$15 million A corpse.

YOKOSUKA, JAPAN pounds, \$48 million DRUG RUNNER'S PACKIN CHALLENGE: Cramming nearly 200 pounds of coke into four backpacks.

CORNWALL. ENGLAND February 2008 WEIGHT AND LOCAL VALUE: 330 pounds. \$14 million UPRIGHT CITIZEN AWARD: A local government employee rolled fifty-five pounds of it home in a wheelbarrow. "I thought if I didn't take it, someone who might not go to the police would.

= 50 POUNDS OF COCAINE

FLOATING IN DUNLOUGH BAY, WEST CORK, **IRELAND** July 2007 3,300 pounds, \$610 million MIND-FUCK: Imagining what happened to the guy who lost it.



→ Rodney Hyden heard the siren song of Julian's famous Culebra cocaine story so many times that it began to take on a mythic, irresistible quality. Less mythic was this mug shot, taken at the Alachua County jail.

Hell, I'm a millionaire, he thought, but just not of the money kind.

Julian was no drug dealer. He didn't even really like blow. But he cut some into a jelly jar he kept in the kitchen, the way you keep nutmeg around for the rare party that requires eggnog. Then he buried the rest. Dug a hole out by the cistern at his house, and into the ground it went.

That was more than fifteen years ago. Julian and his wife kept looking for the sea turtles, but not for much longer. They split up, and he moved back to the States, eventually settling in an Airstream trailer on a big piece of land in northern Florida near a dozen new neighbors who'd get together on the edge of Watermelon Pond and swap stories on Friday nights.

Ain't no way that coke is anywhere but where I left it, he'd say. A million bucks in the ground, and all someone's gotta do is grow a big enough pair to go and get it.



A FEW YEARS AFTER HEARING

the story for the first time, Rodney Hyden moved onto his own forty-acre plot of land, out by Julian's. Archer was a thirty-minute straight shot from Gainesville, followed by a murderously bumpy four-mile dirt road the men blamed for at least four divorces.

Rodney had been raised in Gainesville, worked summers at his father's work sites, and enrolled in the building-construction program at the University of Florida, right there in town. In 2000 he started his own construction company. There were good years there in the early aughts when they'd do \$10 million to \$20 million in businesshotels, airport expansions, the new skybox at the University of Florida football stadium, a.k.a. "the Swamp." B&H Builders grew to eighty employees. Rodney got married to a local girl, had a daughter with her (they each had a kid from previous relationships), built a house for his family in Gainesville, and purchased another one down in Crystal River.

When the real estate market collapsed in 2008, northern Florida was sucked into the fiercest whirlpool. Rodney had already been forced to cut his payroll to six. The bank claimed his river house and his office. He'd grown close with those folks out in Archer and had decided to move there himself.

Those Friday-night fireside happy hours became a beloved ritual, and after enough wine, Julian would tell the cocaine story. If my ex-wife wasn't still down there, Julian would joke, maybe I'd even go back and look for it myself. The story wasn't a sworn secret—no telling how many people

Julian had told over the years—but the cloistered conditions in Archer made it feel like one. Which is why Rodney was taken aback one morning when a guy he barely knew approached him and said: *Hey, man, I can help with that coke down in Puerto Rico*.

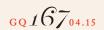
This was Danny Jimenez. Danny lived with a kid who did odd jobs around Rodney's office. At some point, the kid, Andy Culpepper—"a self-admitted functioning drug addict," in Rodney's words; "not one," in Andy's—had gotten wind of the cocaine story. And because Andy liked talking loose and dreaming big when he got high, Danny knew about it, too. When Danny leaned into the passenger window of Rodney's truck that morning, he said he knew a guy who could get the coke back to Florida and another guy who could sell it.

Rodney had never thought seriously about it. He'd always accepted the verity of the story, but never considered for a moment what he'd do if he had a chance to dig it up himself.

We're in January 2012 now. The construction business in Florida has yet to recover. Rodney's down to two employees, including himself, and billing just \$600,000 a year. Prospects for new work are grim. That morning, the first time Danny mentions it, Rodney says, "Danny, it's just a story."

But Danny keeps coming by the office, stoking the notion. He knows a drug dealer in Jacksonville who's got a pilot—they fly coke up from Colombia on the regular. They'd do the job for us if we cut them in on some of the product. Then we take what's left and hand it straight to a dealer in Tampa, El Neg (short for El Negro). Or better yet, Danny says, I'll cut it and double the quantity. El Neg gives us cash for coke, and we split. That did sound pretty straightforward to Rodney. He wouldn't even have to touch the stuff.

In March, Danny drops by again. Something has changed in Rodney. He's got his arms crossed and a fat lip packed with Copenhagen, spitting into a Solo cup, sort of bouncing in his chair. After tiptoeing, for months, out to the edge of the diving board, he finally seems ready to leap. He relishes the challenge of transporting the haul from Puerto Rico to Gainesville. He suggests an airdrop into his soft and sandy yard. They'll fashion a little parachute out of a bedsheet that'll catch just enough breeze to ease her down. No sweat. It's just a one-time-in-a-life opportunity, he says to Danny again and again. He even lays it out with a trusted friend: "I said, 'Man, I'm gonna fucking do it.'"





THREE MONTHS LATER, HE

fucking does it. In June, Rodney drives from a job in Crystal River to a Mexican restaurant on the south side of Jacksonville. Casa Maria has a life-size cardboard cutout of The Most Interesting Man in the World, an electric (broken) countdown clock to Cinco de Mayo, and margaritas available by the pitcher. When Rodney sits down with Danny and the drug dealers, he orders one unsalted on the rocks.

"Y'all had to pick a tight table!" Rodney says, squeezing in. (Rodney's about 300 pounds, his top half shaped like the parentheses around this sentence.) In previous meetings with Danny, Rodney had been firm about wanting to work with a pilot he

One day, AMIDST
A PROFOUND
ORDINARINESS, JULIAN
SPOTTED A PLASTICWRAPPED BALE, ABOUT
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JUST PLOPPED
THERE IN THE FROTH
OF THE TIDE.

knew personally, but Danny has persuaded him to meet with some experienced drugrunning pros. Carlos is Puerto Rican and does most of the talking. Grant is a pilot.

"We've done a lot of favors, and so people owe us a lot of favors," Carlos says. "We have the freedom and the luxury after all these years to actually land in certain places...and do what we need to do to make money. Because at the end of the day, it's all about the money."

Carlos has set up the meeting to vet Rodney and his information. He peppers him with questions about the old guy who used to live in Puerto Rico, the story that Julian tells. He interrogates Rodney about his drug-running bona fides (lacking) and the referral from El Neg.

Rodney tells Carlos and Grant the whole story, emphasizing (continued on next page)



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 167

the supposed quality of the product. "The little he did—I say 'a little,' the lot he did—he said that he could do it and then, two hours later, eat, go to bed. No side effects, no drip and all that stuff. And I'm going, 'Wow, sounds like it's some good stuff.'" Julian has never seemed to care that much about the money—he just loves spinning the tale—but Rodney wants to make sure Julian gets his windfall while there's still time to enjoy it. "He's getting old, man. He's 68 years old," Rodney says. "If he dies before this all happens, it ain't gonna ever happen. And that's sad."

"How much does he want?" Carlos asks. Rodney says Julian has never mentioned a firm number but that a quarter-mil finder's fee is what he's thinking. "That's all?" Carlos says. Rodney doesn't know even a ballpark estimate of the market value. About thirty grand per kilo, Carlos says. There are thirtytwo kilos in the ground, so that's about a million bucks-especially if they can unload some of it in New York instead of Florida. Danny's job is to find the buyer (possibly El Neg). Rodney will pay Carlos and Grant in kilos rather than dollars. Say, four bricks to start, maybe more, depending on what they find. Just take it off the top when you transport the cargo, Rodney says.

Rodney articulates his desire to travel to Puerto Rico to unearth the bale himself—he feels he owes that to Julian—and Rodney

"I'm not about being a drug dealer. But this opportunity, man—for some reason, I was made aware of this opportunity. Believe what you want. It could be sent here from God, for all I know."

and Grant hash out the logistics of getting the coke off the island. "Now, the good thing about Puerto Rico," Grant says, "it's a U.S. territory. That makes it very easy for us."

"Do you have to have a passport to get in and out of there?" Rodney wonders.

Nope, Grant assures him, and if you fly direct, there's nothing to worry about. "I've been flying twenty years, and I've never had a ramp check."

Rodney says he wants to get down there within the next couple of months. "I take my time with everything I do.... I want to make sure it's right," he says. "[Julian is] probably wondering why it's taken me so long to come

back to him, but I just didn't want to commit to him or commit to you guys until I knew it was golden.

"I've worked hard my whole life in the general-construction business," Rodney continues. "Made a bunch of money. But when the bottom fell out five years ago, I didn't draw a paycheck for two years. I had a couple million in the bank [for the company], and now it's gone. It's just, the market fell out, so what am I left with? My 40I(k). I'm tired of it. I'm not about being a drug dealer. Don't care to get into that. But this opportunity, man—for some reason, I was made aware of this opportunity. Believe what you want. It could be sent here from God, for all I know."

IV. IN LATE JUNE OF 2012, Rodney books a last-minute trip to Puerto Rico. The sudden timing isn't surprising so much as the partner he brings along: Andy Culpepper. Andy, in spite of his "fucking big mouth," might prove helpful on recon. Rodney's wife and daughter are heading down to Daytona Beach for the week, and he tells them he and a buddy are going on a fishing trip. The two men catch a flight to San Juan, then a puddle jumper to Culebra.

Before they go, Julian gives Rodney his old coordinates; Rodney keys them into Google and generates a printout. He doesn't think of it as a treasure map, but it's a treasure map.

Rodney nearly shits his pants as they approach Culebra. The wind is blowing hard and sideways, forcing the plane to skirt the mountains. We're not gonna make it, he keeps saying to Andy. We're not gonna make it.

They make it and head to Club Seabourne—a resort Rodney gets at a cut rate, a hundred and fifty bucks a night—and Rodney settles in with the map. Andy heads to a bar, talks to a kid on a skateboard, finds some weed. Holy shit, Rodney thinks, Julian can't find anything to smoke down here in ten years, and it takes Andy an hour. It's latish, too late to go searching tonight, so Rodney and Andy grab dinner at the tiki bar and make plans to head out early tomorrow.

But in the morning, Andy is too sick to leave the room. Rodney's not sure whether it's drug withdrawal or food poisoning. Disgusted, Rodney heads out alone and tracks Julian's instructions through the turtle reserve to the spot where Julian's mobile home used to sit. All that's left is part of the plumbing. Turns out the home was carted off just a few months ago. Still, he's able to locate the cistern, where the bale is buried. Rodney eyeballs the spot eight feet off the cistern, right where it's supposed to be. Everything is as Julian described it.

Except that over the years, it seems, water and sand and coral have calcified into a top layer as hard as concrete. Rodney also notices that there's a government building not more than 200 yards away. He's pretty sure it's where the military does its desalinization—probably Army guys walking by every day. Rodney had been expecting to digright in with his hands, in complete privacy. But there's no way he can break through, especially while exposed like this.

Rodney is prepared to walk away from the whole scheme, but Andy persuades him not to give up entirely. We'll come back, Andy says, when I'm healthy, an able hand.

Two weeks later they're back, and this time Rodney buys a shovel. They head straight to the spot. But "two *ching-chings*" into the dirt, they still can't crack the coral. They dig for a while but don't get far. Andy whines that it's too hot for this shit. After a couple of hours, they throw the shovel into the bushes and give up. Rodney decides, if it's there, nobody's gonna be able to get it out.

On the way home, when they land in San Juan, customs pulls every bag off the plane and brings out a couple of German pointers. There's nothing in their bags to worry about, but Rodney decides right then and there, I'm not coming back here. Not just I'm not coming back to Puerto Rico but I'm not calling Danny again. I'm not calling Carlos again.

After returning, Rodney ghosts. Nobody hears from him for about a week. Carlos and Andy look for him independently. Andy texts, "I figured u would pull some bullshit like that steal my connections and then cut me out." Rodney finally tells everyone, *I'm through*, *I'm done, it's over, forget it.* Carlos does not like the sound of this. What if, Carlos suggests, we change the terms? What if we go get it and you pay us eight bricks instead of four?

Rodney's willing to hear him out, so it's back to Casa Maria, just Carlos and Rodney this time. After some chitchat about the Summer Olympics ("If I were you," Rodney suggests, "I'd pull for the States"), they turn to business. "I'm gonna tell you honestly," Rodney says, "I never wanted to come over here. But you kept insisting."

Rodney takes some serious convincing but eases into a reversal, now that Carlos is offering to do the heavy lifting. "Here's the way I look at it, brother," Rodney says. "Been down there twice. Spent \$5,000. I've got some options here. But I'm hanging my hat on you.... You're Puerto Rican; you can do things that a gringo cannot do down there."

They make plans for how Carlos will make his trip. After the issue with customs in the airport, Carlos says he'll go by boat.

"The ferry?" Rodney says.

"I don't go on the ferry, my friend. No, I go on a sixty-foot yacht. I go there *tranquilo*. Couple of girls. We have a good time, you know? I send my people to look, and I sit back sipping tequila."

Rodney finishes his drink and, basking in the stresslessness of the new plan, expresses both relief and gratitude. "Before I met you," Rodney says, "I looked at what it would cost to charter a jet. Where you would go. Where you would land. Where you would take off from. And then you come along and it's like: There is a God. There is a God."

Before they split up, Rodney hands Carlos the same Google map he'd printed, but with a series of annotations to make it a little easier for Carlos—lines, arrows, X's and O's. "You're going to laugh at this," Rodney says. "You're going to say, 'What the fuck, man?' It's not particularly sophisticated, but it'll do."

"I'm going on an egg hunt," Carlos says excitedly. "Like *Pirates of the Caribbean*."

V. IN PUERTO RICO, Carlos is in touch with Rodney via text. Little questions about the location, confirmation of details—the look of the cistern, for example. As the afternoon of the hunt wears on, Rodney gets

anxious. He e-mails Carlos: "Did you find the nest?" And then, just like that, *bam*, an e-mail with a photo.

It's tough to see clearly—the bricks are wrapped in plastic and rubber, just as Julian had said they'd be. But it's difficult to make out any sort of quantity. Just a bunch of yellowed wrapping and a little white. Still, the nest appears to have been found. Damn, Rodney thinks, they're living up to their end of the deal.

Carlos sends another couple of photos, one with the "double keys"—thirteen pairs of kilos—lined up. Carlos wants to know if this is it—didn't Julian remember there being more? He did, yeah, he said there were sixteen pairs, but we're talking fifteen years ago, Rodney says. "You're right," Carlos e-mails him. "you keep 18 eggs!"

It does indeed look as though the weather's gotten to the bundles—he'd always known cocaine to be pure white, and this looks kinda dark. But who's Rodney to say? Carlos seems ecstatic. Rodney can't believe that after all the talking, all the feinting, all the doubts, it's actually happening. I'm gonna see some real money.

VI. A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER, Carlos calls Rodney to let him know he and Grant got the coke back without incident. Carlos wants to make the handoff that very same afternoon. Now gimme a second, Rodney says, I can't quite do it that quickly. Even though he's in the Jacksonville area, not Gainesville, he says he needs to meet up with Danny first. But Carlos is firm. First he suggests the World Golf Hall of Fame in St. Augustine. But then Carlos changes his mind: Meet me down the highway at the Gander Mountain sporting goods parking lot in a half hour or the deal's off.

Rodney has begun to feel a growing respect and admiration for Carlos, regarding him as something more than just a drug dealer who's warned again and again, since the first meeting at Casa Maria, that he was only there because of the money. Rodney's having a nice time now, isn't ready for this abrupt and unsentimental end. "What's sad," Rodney tells Carlos, "is that you're so good to do business with. I wish I had some more business to do with you."

Rodney hustles across the neck of northern Florida, calls and texts Danny along the way—"Answer the damn phone. He said he will not wait that long" / "Bullshit you don't answer your phone." Danny finally responds, saying he got a flat tire coming back from Tampa and won't be able to make it.

When Rodney arrives in the parking lot and calls Carlos, he says he's inside, picking out a fishing pole for his son. Come into the store, Carlos says, and I'll give you the car keys. Rodney heads inside and finds Carlos, who hands Rodney his keys and says he'll be out in a minute.

Rodney's blood is running quick. He feels it in his wrists and throat. He steps through the sliding doors and out into the August heat, a pregnant three-dimensional heat. His truck is right here, and Carlos's gold Cavalier is over there, but there aren't many other cars in the enormous prairie of blacktop. Rodney gets in his truck and starts driving in slow circles, thinking hard about the strange journey that

has led him here. He presses out wide to the edge of the parking lot, avoiding a direct line to the Cavalier. He sees nothing but the adjacent highway and empty asphalt—the stillness of the whole scene seems safe.

He pulls up beside the Cavalier, unlocks the trunk, and picks up the duffel. Less the fat cut taken off the top, it feels about right in weight. Eighteen kilos, about forty pounds. He slides the duffel onto the bench seat in the back.

And that's all there is. It's over. After the countless meetings and phone calls, the pair of trips to Culebra, it ends up being that easy—even more straightforward than Rodney had ever dreamed it. He takes a step back and just kinda stares at the bag, beholding for this protracted instant what he's pulled off, so fixated on the duffel that he doesn't hear the footsteps approaching, or at least not until he notices the red lasers dancing on his shirt like the mosquitoes that rule Watermelon Pond.

VII. THE FIRST THING Rodney thinks while being shouted to the ground is, *Don't have a hair trigger, buddy.* But then, there isn't a whole lot of sense to be made. He sees St. Johns County sheriff jackets, Homeland Security lettering. Who are all these guys? But slowly and then quickly, like thumbing the pages of a flip-book into full speed, the movie plays backward in his mind. And on the first page, standing there nearly a year ago at the side of his truck—a face in the window filled with divinely intervened helpfulness—is Danny Jimenez.

In the winter of 2012, Danny Jimenez was pulled over by cops in Alachua County. He had 130 oxycodone pills in the car. He fled on foot at first and ultimately faced a fifteen-year mandatory minimum sentence. The state was flooded with oxycodone dealers—Florida's addiction to the drug was the worst in the nation—and an Alachua County deputy sheriff named Joe Rawley told Danny that good information would be taken into consideration when his case was up for review. Danny delivered a few small-beans drug tips, and then one day he mentioned this story his friend Andy had told him.

In March of 2012, Rawley hooked Danny up with a wire and a small camera so that the Alachua County sheriff's office might see and hear a little about the plans Rodney Hyden had in store for the cocaine down in Culebra. What landed on the tape was enough to get the Homeland Security Investigations unit involved. Rawley started working with an agent named Ryan McEnany. Together they recruited "Carlos" and "Grant," undercover agents who would pose as drug dealers throughout the sting.

Rawley is a young sheriff who sometimes works in an office Rodney helped build. McEnany is more experienced and seems to have called most of the shots in the operation. He has a goatee and looks like he'd be really good at adult softball. "Part of the reason Joe contacted me is that nobody in his office really believed him," McEnany says, smiling.

Though all the lines in the script were delivered by "Carlos," McEnany dictated the meeting places ("We wanted to see if he was willing to go out of his way to get to the meeting, in a place that was inconvenient for

him, during the afternoon, on a weekday") and terms of payment. He analyzed the map Rodney handed over and directed the operation in Puerto Rico. Carlos never went to Culebra; local agents dug up the coke.

McEnany and Rawley deliberately kept Danny away from Rodney that day. "We wanted to make sure there was no evidence that we had entrapped him," McEnany says. "That there was not a guy coaxing him over. He would literally be by himself.... Rodney was in the driver's seat the whole time." At the end, in the parking lot, McEnany helped Rodney off the ground and moved him to an

Rodney, therefore, is charged for intent to distribute not what federal agents actually found but what he was expecting them to find—a crime of anticipation.

official vehicle. "We've been watching you for months," he told Rodney. "You got anything to tell me?" Rodney asked for a lawyer.

After six months of surveillance, the coordinated role-playing efforts of a halfdozen undercover federal agents, a Puerto Rican excavation, and an expense report that included several margarita tabs at Casa Maria, one might argue that it was a Pyrrhic victory for law enforcement. Rodney Hyden wasn't exactly a kingpin. But McEnany and Rawley insist there was a principle at stakea principle worth defending. "I think he was really just driven by greed," Rawley says. "He wanted the quick money, he wanted the reward. When the economy goes, people turn to other things, but he could've done a lot of different things to supplement his income. No one else did what he did."

VIII. RODNEY IS ULTIMATELY charged with attempted possession, five-plus kilograms of cocaine—a ten-year mandatory minimum. The coke he was arrested with was not the coke they dug up in Culebra but rather a blend of sham and real cocaine packed by McEnany and Rawley.

Though the contents of the duffel square with the eighteen kilos Rodney was promised, they don't reflect what was pulled from the ground in Puerto Rico. Not even close. Of that bundle, what actually tested positive for cocaine was merely 2.2 kilos-and that wasn't even sellable, it was such shit. A calcified blend of seawater, sand, and coke-ish rock. Rodney, therefore, is charged for intent to distribute not what federal agents actually found but what he was expecting them to find-a crime of anticipation. This fact is paramount to Rodney's lawyer, Mark Rosenblum, a Jacksonville attorney who looks a little like Joe Lieberman minus the parts that remind people of the emperor from Star Wars.

The salient legal issue, Rosenblum argues, is whether Rodney Hyden was entrapped. Rodney is not a drug dealer. He didn't know the market value of a kilo of cocaine. He didn't know that you could get to Puerto Rico

without a passport. He almost certainly would never have pursued the Culebra cocaine if he hadn't been approached and persuaded by Danny Jimenez—a confidential informant participating in a self-serving sting operation. And he had no other drug-dealer connections besides Danny and the undercover cops he met. "And the guy playing Carlos was as good as I've seen," Rosenblum says. "I mean, Hollywood quality."

In July 2013, Rawley and McEnany bring Julian Howell, Andy Culpepper, and Danny Jimenez to Jacksonville to testify. (Despite living with Danny, Andy never caught on to the sting, nor was he charged with abetting Rodney.) When asked what he was doing in Puerto Rico, Andy lies under oath—"building sand castles"—and cracks up the jury and judge. By contrast, Rodney is staid, suited, dignified. But he can't fight the impression made by the surveillance footage—Rodney sitting like a don at his office desk, spitting nito a cup, talking up his weed stash and firearm, assessing the prospects of a cocaine airdrop as "easy as shit."

Within hours of closing arguments, the jury issues a guilty verdict.

"I think the jury just didn't like me," Rodney says later. "They saw me in that first taped meeting in my office, smirking and sitting with my arms crossed—that's just how I sit!—but they took it as Mr. Cocky."

While the judge considers the sentencing, Rodney and Mark file a motion arguing for leniency, based on a new recommendation from Attorney General Eric Holder's office that nonviolent drug offenders receive reduced sentences. This is a national problem, of course—the Rodneys of America plugging up jails. The prosecution recommends forgoing the tenyear "mandatory" minimum, asking for thirty months, but Rosenblum argues that Rodney's skills as a general contractor will better serve the community outside prison.

The judge struggles to arrive at what he deems to be a just sentence, ultimately handing down sixty days behind bars followed by five years of community service. The government's aggressive role in the planning and execution of the sting clearly bugs him: If they would have left it buried in the ground, it would still be there, is the sentiment. Though the jury rejects the claim of entrapment, the light sentence seems to spell out the truer spirit of the court's opinion. What a shit-ton of fishing line and tackle we've wasted, the sixty-day sentence suggests, for such a small fish.

As for Rawley and McEnany, they're satisfied with where things end up. "I couldn't have imagined a better sentence," McEnany says. "He has way more to contribute to society managing the construction of homes than sitting in a box. And when you look at terms of the community service—twenty hours a week for five years?—it's actually pretty harsh. There are some cases where you say, 'I can't believe they only got this.' This is not one of those."

IX. RODNEY CLOCKS his two months at Jesup federal prison in southern Georgia. In addition to a horde of white-collar criminals with whom Rodney spends most of his time, there's one of Pablo Escobar's top American deputies—serving a thirty-year

sentence—and the guy who hacked Scarlett Johansson's phone. "One thing I learned in there," Rodney says, "is that once the government's got you in the crosshairs, you're asking for trouble. Almost anything you do can be construed as a crime."

Rodney and I had been in touch for eight months before we met in person. It had been his intention, he'd said, to tell me his version of events in full, but not until after the trial, and then not until after the appeal of his sentence, and finally not until after his time in prison. The week after he gets out, he suggests we talk in Rosenblum's office in Jacksonville so that he might "be kept from wandering off the rails."

"For a long time I was angry for doing something so stupid," Rodney says at one point. "At my age, I should know better." He mentions the moment Carlos told him to go to the car by himself. The fact that "Grant," the pilot, wouldn't let him see his tail numbers. All signs he should've picked up on. "I did something stupid. But I think, as the judge pointed out in the sentencing, they had some culpability, too. I just think it was a waste of taxpayers' dollars."

We cover A to Z, which mostly corroborates everything I already know from the court documents and wiretap transcripts, but I feel as if Rodney holds back a little, as if there's some door of his I've failed to knock on. I suppose I'm digging for a better explanation than "I did something stupid." Rodney and I leave Rosenblum's office together. After talking about his football days and shaking hands on the curb, it's over.

I'd booked a hotel room in Gainesville, under the initial assumption that we'd do the interview there. I decide to head down the next morning anyway. That afternoon, I tool around campus and, expecting nothing, drop Rodney a note about maybe checking out his office. My phone lights up at once.

"Hey, Dan? I can't believe you're here, man," he says. I expect the cautious Rodney of the previous day, but instead: "Guess who I just got off the phone with. How would you like to meet Julian?"

X. IT'S ONLY FIFTEEN MILES from Gainesville to Archer, but where we go next is less a distance traveled geographically than psycho-spatially. At the abrupt end of a paved lane lined with pine trees, we're dumped onto the dreaded four-mile dirt road. Besides the neighbors I've heard about before—Rodney and his wife and daughter, Julian and his Airstream, the guy with the fire pit—there are a handful of others, including a Vietnam vet, who serves as the lone-wolf neighborhood watch, and a man with two pet elephants.

We pass Rodney's house, a double-wide on forty acres. He has a garden out back, a brown dog named Brown Dog, and a feather-less cockatoo, all black skin like a plastic bag. He says you can sometimes see the elephants from the porch as they stroll to Watermelon Pond for a drink.

We drive in deeper. The road becomes softer, sandier, and there's a Big Top of overgrowth. At the edge of Julian's property, we confront a gate guarded with a GOPHER TORTOISE CROSSING sign, the (real) skulls of several cows, and the (fake) skull of a human.

"You ever see the movie *Deliverance*?" Rodney says. "This is it, man." We push deeper still and then we're there. Rodney cuts the engine and the live oaks fizz with insects, the static of dropped radio contact. Julian pops out of his Airstream and meets us near his Volvo—white T-shirt, shorts, neat ponytail, trim scruff. He'd cut his beard for a recent road trip.

Julian finds it all sorts of funny that I'm back here, that I even heard of the story at all. His voice is about as excitable as Willie Nelson's. (Perhaps that's the ponytail's power of suggestion.) He offers to show us some new projects he's working on—he hoards old cars, buses, and boats—and on the march out back, past an eight-foot pit filled with hundreds of wine bottles, I notice the infamous bare feet. Amidst the sand spurs and starfish-sized spiders, Julian hasn't elected to wear shoes in twenty years.

After Rodney's arrest, the question of Julian's culpability hung around unresolved. Law enforcement never charged Julian, but they never officially cleared him of wrongdoing, either. He did bury that bale in the first place, after all, and Rodney's plan called for Julian to clear \$250,000. But from the go, Rodney kept Julian in the dark about the dirty work—he limited his involvement to telling the story and helping with the map.

Rodney mentions, kind of incredulously, that during their investigation, Rawley and McEnany found their way back here to pay Julian a surprise visit. "They were a little nervous when they walked up on me," Julian tells me as a light rain begins to fall. "I was in the shower, and I came out, and they were shouting and armed with all this stuff. And my beard was down to here, and my hair was out to here.... It was reasonable for them to think I might come out swinging a machete or something." But after speaking with him, they realized Julian was just as Rodney had described him: all beard, no bite.

At the time of my visit, it's two years to the week since Rodney's arrest. From the beginning, various observers have ascribed his motivation to greed (that's the view of law enforcement); the recession (small-business owners); the desire to leave an inheritance for his wife and daughter (fans of *Breaking Bad*); stupidity and hubris and a midlife crisic (some of the papers that cover the story). Motivations that implicitly characterize Rodney as an individual with full agency over the episode, rather than the product of a group and that group's unique regard for society.

But if, in the end, we're all still looking for a named thing to hang the blame on, we could do worse than this: Blame the four-mile dirt road. Blame it on the Airstream. Blame the elephants. Blame the fantastic remoteness of this place. Back here beyond the boring constraints of better judgment, beyond the easy dismissal of a tall tale that's too good to be true, a whole lot more seems possible. Back here is such a pure place for good talk, but also a greenhouse for bad ideas. Which is no big deal if those ideas stay back here. But when you introduce the convictions cooked up at the campfire to the outside world, the cocaine dream spreads like a flame that's found fresh air, engulfing every true believer in its path.

So blame the perfect conditions of just the right story told just the right way in just the right environment. Blame the sounds of the

story—the slithering South Carolina accent, the whistly snicker—and the charismatic look of the storyteller. Blame the snap of the fire and the warmth of the wine.

A little later in the afternoon, at what people who are not Rodney and Julian might call the magic hour, the biting bugs swarm and the rain steams right back up off the ground and into the clouds. It's time to go. But first, one final thing:

I know this may seem unnecessary at this point, I say, but will you tell me the story?

"Well," Julian says, "it's the same version Rodney told you, I'm sure." But it can't be, because it's not just the facts of the story, I start to say, it's—

"He wants to know," Rodney says, getting my meaning just right, "what the hell prompted me to go down there and do something dumb."

Julian tells the story. It's really good.

Rodney laughs hard and steers Julian into some favorite details. Little twists, extra texture, and then this new chapter, the third act, starring Rodney Hyden. Later I'll tell Rodney I get it, I get why it worked. And Rodney will lean in and quietly say, "You should hear it when he's shitfaced."

As Rodney and I make our way back to his truck, Julian's mind seizes one last note. "The thing I like to think about sometimes," he says unprompted, "is what a neat scenario it is that anybody else could've found that bale and had an entirely different experience. It's a fun thing to think about. You can put anybody in that situation and go everywhere with it." A blameless thought exercise, like the whole thing used to be. And then he and Rodney, good neighbors, laugh softly and shake their heads, like, What a crazy story that'd make.

DANIEL RILEY is a GQ senior editor.

JON HAMM



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 117

most of whom had been on the show since the beginning, and asked them to follow him to his office. There he revealed the real ending. It was a level of caution that was probably warranted, considering that, thanks to AMC's decision to split the final season into two parts, the secret would have to be kept for well over a year.

Hamm, by that point, had already kept it far longer. Before each season, around the time that Weiner began to reconvene his writers' room, he and Hamm would meet for a discussion of the upcoming season. Often the meetings would take place at the Pacific Dining Car, near Downtown L.A., an almost-century-old twenty-four-hour diner populated at odd hours by politicians, lawyers, and judges from the nearby court buildings, as well as showrunners and their stars fitting one another into busy schedules.

Despite Weiner's well-earned reputation as a dazzling monologuist, these were apparently conversations. "We would sit down and talk about where we left off and how old is Don now. What is it to be 36 and in a position of incredible power and to have the rug pulled out from under you in your relationship? What is it about starting a new job—the bluster and confidence that takes? What is it about turning 40? Losing touch with your kids? Being in a relationship with a younger woman? What's that all about?" Hamm says.

Ultimately, that's always been *Mad Men's* ambition: to portray, sometimes ruthlessly, what real life is like—in all its messiness, frustration, and lack of clear progress. It was a reverse origin story, setting up Don as superhero and immediately beginning a project of dismantlement, chipping away until it occurred to horrified viewers that perhaps Superman was Clark Kent and nothing more all along: just another Everyman with vomit on his shirt.

That's been harder for many of us to accept than it has been for Hamm, who always brought a special depth of understanding to who Don is. He continues to be clearer-eyed than most at answering Vulture's question: Of *course* Don is a bad dude. "I'm the guy who lives with the guy every day, and I'm like, 'No, no, no, no, no,'" he says of people who would excuse the character's behavior. "But I also get the thing in popular culture, American culture, where you see a broken thing and go, 'I want to fix that. I want to shape that. I want to cure that."

In any event, it may have been at one of those Pacific Dining Car meetings, Hamm doesn't remember exactly, that Weiner first gave him an intimation of how the show would end. This was around season three, when Weiner was embroiled in a dispute with AMC and there was no guarantee that the end wasn't actually pretty nigh.

"He just kind of had this idea. This image," Hamm remembers. It must feel very long ago, now that the image has become real, Don Draper's end committed forever to film and locked away somewhere. "I said, 'That's very poetic. All right. But now we've got to get there.' It's one thing to say we're going to end in Topeka, but how are we going to get to Topeka?"

3. Free Man "HEY, FUCKO."

It was a few years ago, and Hamm and Westfeldt were on their way out of Orso, a restaurant in New York. Hamm looked up, into the grinning face of James Gandolfini, who was just stepping out of a chauffeured car, arriving for dinner. "I'm like, 'Oh, Jesus.' He was just the nicest guy, always very sweet and friendly. But the first thing you think is you're going to be murdered." Gandolfini offered to have his driver take them home—a tip of the hat from a Difficult Man Emeritus, now out of the game, to a younger member still in the thick of it.

Sometime later, in Boston, Hamm ran into Bryan Cranston, himself only recently freed from the yoke of *Breaking Bad.* "It's hard, man," Cranston told him. "It's hard to let it go. It'll hit you a couple of different ways at different times."

So far, it seems to mostly be disorienting. Shooting for the second half of season seven ended way back last summer. "The whole last season was like senior year in high school," Hamm says. "'We'll stay in touch!' 'I'll text you!' 'We'll see each other all the time!' And it's like, 'Will we *really*?'"

There's been a dawning realization that this summer vacation won't be coming to an end, that he'll never go through the transformation into Don again, never slip into that smooth, seductive wardrobe. "You button up into one of those suits and it's like, 'Okay, there's a certain way that I feel. I feel confident. I feel put together. I feel greatlooking.' You get the whole gear going and you're like, 'All right.'"

That, of course, underplays both the virtuosity of the performance and its burden-something that Gandolfini and Cranston could have warned him about. "Whenever people want to talk about how hard it is to be an actor, I want to go, 'Um, it's hard to be a baby-heart surgeon. Being an actor is actually pretty easy, if you can memorize lines," he says. Still, he admits that it's been draining to follow Don on his repeated downward spirals. "You're kind of hoping for redemption, and it's not forthcoming.... To consistently come in and be the bummer was always like, 'Oh, that's not fun.' But at the same time, it's been like the greatest obstacle course in the world. A puzzle to figure out."

"It's a confusing juxtaposition," Westfeldt says. "I think the darkness of Don has weighed heavily on Jon, despite it being the role of a lifetime and the opportunity that gave him the career of his dreams. The end was of

"Whenever people want to talk about how hard it is to be an actor, I want to go, 'Um, it's hard to be a babyheart surgeon.' Being an actor is actually pretty easy, if you can memorize lines."

course bittersweet and complicated for Jonny. But I know that when he wrapped the show in L.A., in the wee hours of July 3 last year, and then immediately got on a plane to New York to meet me and our dog, Cora, for dinner with a few close friends and to watch the fireworks, he felt a predominant sense of relief. He remarked on the cosmic coincidence of the date: Independence Day. Finally."

JON HAMM CONTINUED

"Look, the one constant thing I've had in my career is now removed," says Hamm. "And that's an eye-opener: Are people still going to take me seriously? Am I just going to do romantic comedies for the rest of my life? What's next? And I don't know, you know? I wish I was smug enough to have had a grand plan. I guess some people would say, 'Okay, the last three years of *Mad Men* is going to be like this: I want to do a play. I want to do this. I want to do that.' I was just like, 'I want to do something that seems cool.'"

That's meant strikingly few movies—fewer still of the variety you might have expected at the outset. He turned down the inevitable flood of smoldering-period-piece offers that followed *Mad Men*'s success, but also subsequent chances to take on the kind of superhero roles for which his jawline might have been generated in

a 3-D printer. A franchise like that is just too much of a long-term commitment. He's happy that with the exception of a stint in India filming *Million Dollar Arm*, most of his work has been done close to his homes in L.A. and on New York's Upper West Side. He likes being near Cora. It takes a certain kind of homebody to hear the final moment of the most important character he may ever play and think "Topeka."

"Change is neither good or bad," Don Draper once said. "It just is." The end was there from the beginning. It's all about to end all over again. Jon Hamm is ready.

BRETT MARTIN is a GQ correspondent and the author of Difficult Men: Behind the Scenes of a Creative Revolution, from "The Sopranos" and "The Wire" to "Mad Men" and "Breaking Bad," now out in paperback.

A\$AP ROCKY



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 135

But like every multi-hyphenate millennial running the game, the man won't be boxed in. And now 26-year-old Rocky has outgrown both his Cali crash pad and explanations of his celebrity that require transitive properties. He's evolving beyond the splashy rapper, the fashion plate, the heartthrob. For 2015, A\$AP Rocky's eyeing ballsy new terrain—the big screen.

Dope debuted at this year's Sundance festival as a whip-smart redefinition of pop culture in a digital age. The coming-of-age comedy with rapid-fire references from dorky Bitcoin jokes to Jay Z lyrics about moving drugs is a black film in the same way that rap today is black. (Hint: It's not.) Rocky is compulsively watchable as Dom, a supremely confident Inglewood drug dealer. When he's leaning against a vintage Chevy Impala, you're buying what he's selling. "I was sober the entire time," he says. "My character's smoking cigarettes 'cause I didn't want to pretend to smoke weed."

The Sundance crowd fell hard for *Dope*, and that moment in Park City should have been a triumph. A young rapper, no training, holding his own in an indie movie, *earning* that love. But that all came mere days after the untimely—and still unresolved—death of A\$AP Yams, a.k.a. Steven Rodriguez, cofounder of the A\$AP Mob and Rocky's close friend. Today on the roof, three weeks later, the typically effusive Rocky doesn't want to talk about it. "Mentally I wasn't even there," he says about Sundance before changing the subject.

Rocky has spoken of loss. He's told his story before: born in Harlem as Rakim Mayers, two months after the debut of Eric B. & Rakim's *Follow the Leader*. A late father he says was locked up for much of Rocky's youth. An elder brother he says was killed when Rocky was only 13. Named after hip-hop's greatest lyricist, he comes into his chosen vocation with expectations. That's like naming your kid Laurence Olivier and dropping him off at Harvard-Westlake School in Hollywood just to see what happens.

Rocky's more aware of the pressure than ever with his second album, *At.Long.Last. A\$AP*. He and his camp won't share many details, given that his first label album, *Long. Live.A\$AP*, leaked before its January 2013 release date—a fiduciary buzzkill, given the colossal hype coming off his mixtape the year before. What I do know is that right now he's recording two songs with Danger Mouse at Sound Factory, the wavy L.A. recording studio where Tom Waits, Beck, and Elvis Costello created hits. But *At.Long.Last.A\$AP* was born in London (at Red Bull Studios), and you can hear it.

Sure, there's Rocky's signature jet-setting swag and the usual fashion shout-outs, but you can also hear psychedelic '60s London and introspection. You hear Rocky singing. And acoustic guitar. And an unknown Brit named Joe Fox, whom Rocky met near the studio. "We were literally wandering the streets at 4 A.M. on a Tuesday and this guy walked up holding a guitar," says Rocky's longtime collaborator Hector Delgado of Clockwork Studios. Fox played them a song, and now he pops up all over the new album. Like Rocky declares on one work-in-progress track he played for me: The new me gon' take some getting used to.

"I'm claiming ownership of my legacy," Rocky says, sitting up on the rooftop banquette. "Look at it: At.Long.Last.A\$AP. A-L-L-A. Like slang for 'Allah.' It's the return of the god MC." Rocky leans way in, as if letting me in on a secret. "I'm named after Rakim, and I'm finally facing what it means: I was born to do this shit," he says. "And I hope I get to do it for a very long time."

MARY H.K. CHOI is a writer based in Los Angeles.

PARDON HIS FRENCH



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 139

TOUITOU (PRONOUNCED too-ee-too) lives with his wife, Judith, in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, not far from the A.P.C. offices, behind one of those fairy-tale Parisian nineteenth-century facades, past a cobblestone court-yard that was probably used for a coronation or a beheading at some point. Saint-Germain is where Touitou's parents moved, from Tunisia, when he was 9, and he has lived in this neighborhood most of his life. Now he's thinking about leaving.

It's a surreal thing to contemplate for Touitou, but it's also a surreal time in Paris-even before the January attacks on the offices of Charlie Hebdo and a kosher supermarket, in which seventeen people were murdered by Islamist terrorists over three days. Touitou and his wife are Jewish, though in an avowedly secular, atheist kind of way. "I didn't know what a Jew was until I came to France," Touitou says one night over dinner. But now "our country is so anxious," Judith says. "It's so strange, like all your life, your identity is just being French, and all of a sudden you feel like you're threatened as a Jew. But it made us realize, we've been scared for a few years."

And "that's pretty ironical for us, because we're not into religion at all," Jean says. "There's something that went wrong, and we have generations now of kids who say, 'No, first it's God, and then it's the republic," rather than the other way around. Since the French Revolution, the country has venerated liberty, equality, and fraternity over religion, he says. "But that has never been told to them, and now there's a huge clash."

A clash that Touitou feels he and his family are on the wrong side of. "And this is why I'm thinking about moving out of the country, because I really love this country, but this is a civil-war situation."

There are places in the city Touitou used to walk freely that feel unsafe now—places where "I was saying to myself, I'm glad I'm not a woman in a skirt. A knee-length skirt, you know. Because nothing is tolerated. And if you say that to anybody French, they will say, 'You're a fascist!' I will say, 'No, I'm telling you, let's go together. Don't overdo your hair or eyes or whatsoever. Just be like a woman. And you'll see if you can walk.'" Touitou, an immigrant himself, says there's a whole generation of immigrants who have been lost to France: "We have left them in the projects."

Even after the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings, he says, the country did not exactly pull together. "If no cartoonist was shot and if it was only Jews in the kosher supermarket who got shot, I bet you there would be no demonstrations. And that is the truth. If I say that in a

magazine, people will say, 'Jean's a Zionist' or whatsoever. But that is the truth."

His father, who imported leather, was himself forced to leave Tunisia in the 1950s on account of his religion, and so for years the country represented a lost paradise for Touitou. He'd have nightmares about it, the huge house by the sea where his family used to live. "The title of the dream was always 'Dépossession.' 'La dépossession.'"

But Touitou came to adore his new home. It was the Situationist '60s, and he was young in Paris. He read Voltaire and became a Marxist, then sold out-first as a business guy with Kenzo Takada, the Japanese designer, in the coke-rich '70s, and then as an importer of rare American punk records, until that enterprise failed. He launched A.P.C. in 1987, as a response to the "Miami Vice style" of the era. He met a guy who told him about another guy, a guy in Hiroshima, selling super-small-width denim, and Touitou flew to meet him. "And we made an arrangement, unwritten, that's still there for twenty-eight years. Because he created another version of this fabric for me. There was a secret in it. Even I don't say it to myself, so nobody knows?

Touitou had discovered not just a market inefficiency—in making simple, stylish clothing at a moment when simple, stylish clothing didn't really exist—but his real talent. He had taste, and an ability to see what was coming before it arrived.

A.P.C. was an immediate phenomenon in Japan, and then it caught on in Paris and New York and London, too. Now, Judith says at dinner, "at parties, like in the art world, or in a fancy place like in an organic market here in the Seventh Arrondissement, on a Sunday

But whether A.P.C. will remain—or can remain—in Paris has become something Touitou wonders about. I ask where they'd go. Somewhere sunny, Touitou says—Los Angeles, Italy, who knows?

morning, maybe a third of the people" are wearing A.P.C. The brand, which does about \$55 million of business a year, has come to define Paris cool—even as A.P.C.'s customers have been growing older and maybe a bit more conservative.

"What concerns me is, I see them aging like me," Touitou says. So amid everything else, he's contemplating adding a younger line to A.P.C.'s growing empire. (Left unspoken here is the fact that publicly butchering the code around what songs you can and can't quote probably isn't going to help Touitou with the kids—a fact he clearly knows all too well. "I'm still capable of talking to the youth," he says adamantly.)

But whether A.P.C. will remain—or can remain—in Paris has become something Touitou wonders about. So he and Judith sit and imagine what the brand, French to its core, would be like if it weren't in France. I ask where they'd go. Somewhere sunny,

Touitou says—Los Angeles, Italy, who knows? A few years ago, Touitou bought a forty-five-foot police boat from Finland. "I killed this nightmare about going back to my house again in Tunisia since I had the boat. Because to paraphrase a famous song, wherever I go with my boat, that's my home. I feel good there." Touitou says.

"I say to myself, maybe my mother country—maybe it's the Mediterranean Sea."

THE NEXT DAY, we meet in London, where Touitou is hosting a party to celebrate the opening of a new A.P.C. store in Soho, just off Beak Street, part of the last heave of gentrification settling down over London's old red-light district. The store has red tiles, subtle fluorescent light, and inviting, familiar racks of clothing. Seeing this stuff after two days with Touitou brings on a warm feeling, something akin to contentment, a quiet satisfaction in the right muted color or details. A vaguely good feeling that I immediately feel guilt, in light of recent events, for feeling.

Earlier this afternoon, he'd told me, when I'd asked, that A.P.C.'s business was unchanged after his Fashion Week implosion—"on the retail, didn't move anything." He'd said he was eager to prove himself, going forward: "I can only answer with creativity, since with your own brain you cannot answer. It's like fighting a storm."

On the first floor of Touitou's Paris offices, there is a recording studio, usually occupied by a couple of guys named Victor and Pierre. But recently, Touitou says, he's been sneaking downstairs to work on music of his own. Though he is not a man who tends to lack for words, he's lately come to mistrust them, and so he has taken to writing songs—songs that no one will ever hear (except, apparently, you, the reader of this national magazine), songs that say uncomfortable things that he's given up trying to say another way.

After he'd had his Timberland presentation, and "after all that happened"—the attacks in Paris—"I'm writing now a song called 'Dead Fish Blues," Touitou says.

It is a song, in his telling, about judgmentdeserved and otherwise. "It's symbolic, because it's a fish that got stupid enough with his ignorance of what the hook could be. The fish, ignorant, he goes after the hook. He can't swim anymore. He's not in the sea anymore. You get it? And then he's delivered in a restaurant. So he's dead one time, all right. He's delivered in a very good fish restaurant, where the chef cooks the sea bass in the exquisite way. He steams it, but on a bed of seaweed. So far, one could say that's a dignified end to that fish, who was ignorant enough. He's sort of okay. But then comes in the restaurant a fashion-editor woman. She can't use the knife, really. So she takes the fork in the right hand and takes the flesh, like this-" he mimes laying waste to a fish-"and it looks like a mess on the plate. And the maître d' comes and says, 'Madame, you just killed him a second time.

"So I'm writing this, because that's the mood I'm in right now. 'Dead Fish Blues.'
This is how I make things. And then this will be over."

ZACH BARON is GQ's staff writer.

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Correction. In the March issue, the photo of Rose's Luxury on page 177 should have been credited to Greg Powers. GQ regrets the error.

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